BON-MOTS

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH

CENTURY



GROTESQUES

BY ALICE

WOODWARD

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AUTHOR

Bon-mots of the
18th century.

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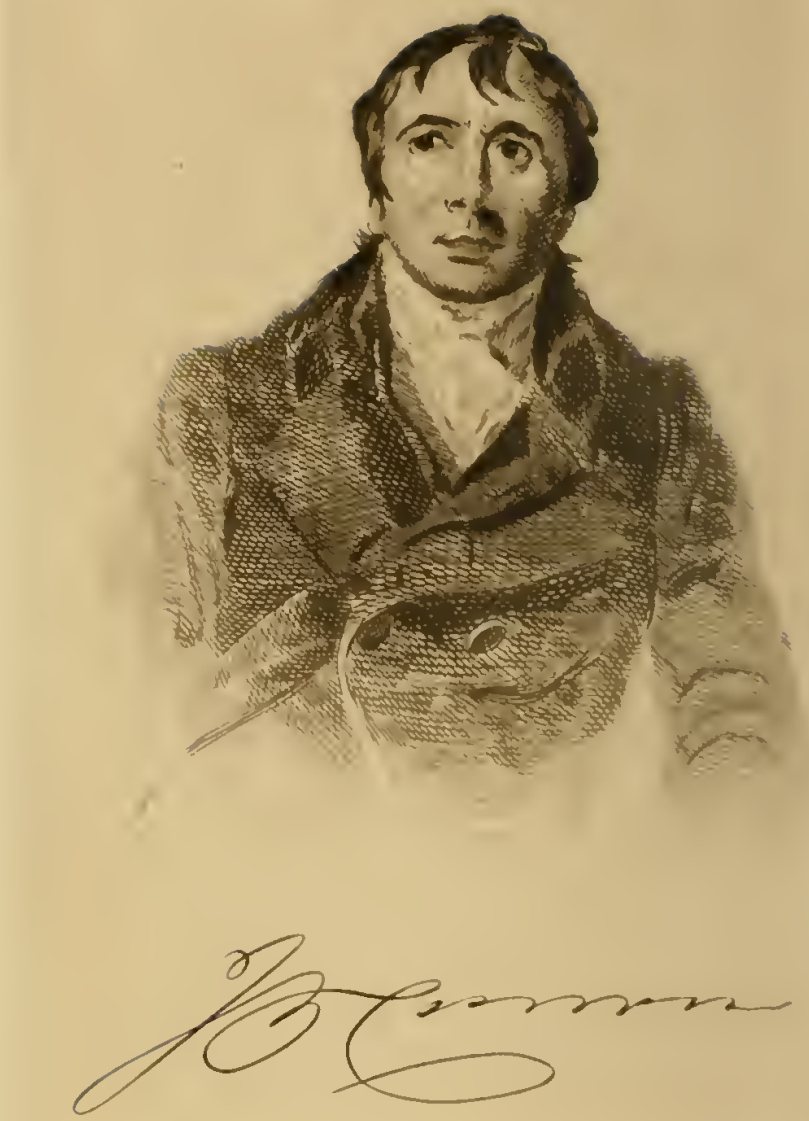


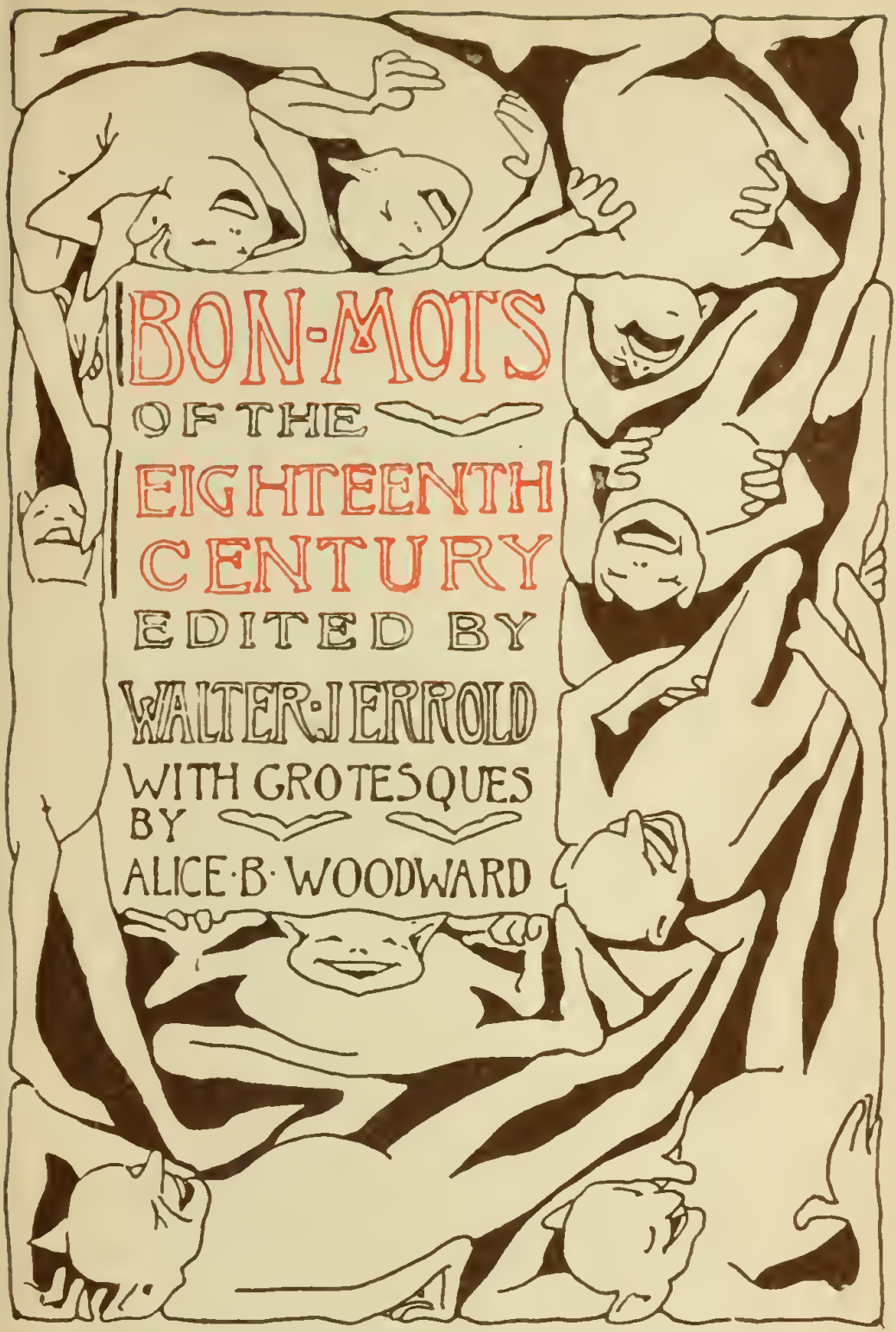
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"*A penetrating wit hath an air of divination.*"
—La Rochefoucault.

"*True wit is nature to advantage drest*
Oft thought before, but nc'er so well exprest."
—Pope.

"*Wit may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of* concordia discors—*a combination of dissimilar images or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.*"—Johnson.

"*Nothing is so much admired, and so little understood as wit.*"—Addison.

"*Tell me, oh tell, what kind of thing is wit,*
Thou who master art of it?
A thousand different shapes it bears,
Comely in thousand shapes appears.
Yonder we see it plain; and here 'tis now,
Like spirits, in a place, we know not how."
—Cowley.

"*Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish?*"—Barrow.



INTRODUCTION.

"NOTHING," said Addison in beginning the fifty-eighth *Spectator*, "Nothing is so much admired and so little understood as wit." To the Essayist the word meant very much the same thing as it does to us, although its significance has somewhat narrowed within the past hundred and eighty-five years. A "man of wit" of the eighteenth century was not necessarily of the same type as a "man of wit" of the nineteenth, but in the following pages we are not concerned with all men of wit of the eighteenth century, only with those of them who manifested in their conversation the possession of that volatile quality. In other words, we are concerned with witty things spoken rather than written. The object has been to gather together a representative collection of the "Bon-Mots of the Eighteenth Century" and of the recorded conversational witticisms of all sorts and conditions of men. It is not by any means pretended that this small volume enshrines *all* the conversational

good things recorded from the reign of William of Orange to that of the third of the Georges, nor is it even pretended that all the brilliant repartees of Erskine, the solemn retorts of Johnson, the neat *mots* of Chesterfield, are to be found herein. The preparation of such a complete collection would be a well-nigh endless task, and though it would be by no means difficult to make a larger volume than this, to do so would be to thwart the end in view—that of providing a small companionable collection.

The plan pursued in earlier volumes of this series, of giving contemporary descriptions of the wits—of attempting to show them in their habit as they lived, cannot be followed here, where in place of two, some hundred and fifty wits are represented. I have, therefore, thought it would not be uninteresting, instead of showing what those who lived in the eighteenth century had to say of their men of wit, to give some indications of their philosophical flounderings after a definition of wit itself. As Addison said, it is but little understood, — yet every person of average intelligence knows what is wit, though he knows not what wit is.

Beauty, poetry, wit—they simply elude definition. We may cite examples saying that face or picture is beautiful, those lines are poetry, that retort is wit, but yet we cannot satisfactorily say why each is what it obviously is. Many are the writers who have essayed a de-

finition of the elusive quality—letters three do form its name—but a brief yet comprehensive description of what is meant is yet to seek. Nought but itself can be its parallel. We may, with Archbishop Tillotson, entirely beg the question, and call wit "a very commendable Quality"; we may follow the lead of a philosopher, John Locke, and call it an assemblage of congruous ideas; we may vaguely term it "a series of high and exalted ferments" with Sir Richard Blackmore, or a *concordia discors* with the great lexicographer; but in the end we are left very much where we started, strong in the knowledge that wit is——wit.

We have, indeed, a kind of *concordia discors* in the following strainings after the apparently unattainable, yet far be it from the compiler to suggest that the assemblage of ideas constitutes a witty introduction. The dates after the various definer's names are in all cases those of the author's death, and we will begin with two writers who died before the close of the seventeenth century.

Isaac Barrow (1677): But first it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man—"'Tis that which we all see and know;" anyone better apprehends what it is by acquaintance than I

can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being; sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it con-

sisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by), which by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression doth affect or amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit and reach of wit more than vulgar: it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accomodate them to the purpose before him; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination.

Archbishop Tillotson (1694): Wit is a very commendable Quality, but then a wise man should have the keeping of it. It is a sharp weapon, as apt for mischief as for good purpose, if it be not well managed. The proper use of it is to season conversation, to represent what is praiseworthy to the greatest advantage and to expose the vices and follies of men, such things as are in themselves truly ridiculous.

John Locke (1704): Men who have a great

deal of wit, and prompt memories, have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason: for wit lying mostly in the assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, whereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy; judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully, one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference—thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another. This is a way quite contrary to metaphor and allusion, wherein for the most part lies that entertainment and pleasantry of wit which strikes so lively on the fancy; and therefore is so acceptable to all people—because its beauty appears at first sight, and there is required no labour of thought to examine what truth or reason there is in it. The mind, without looking any further, rests satisfied with the agreeableness of the picture and the gaiety of the fancy; and it is a kind of affront to go about to examine it by the severe rules of truth and good reason, whereby it appears that it consists in something that is not perfectly conformable to them.

Joseph Addison (1719): This is,* I think,

* Addison is commenting on the very passage of Locke's quoted just before.

the best and most philosophical account that I have ever met with of wit, which generally, though not always, consists in such a resemblance and congruity of ideas as this author mentions. I shall only add to it by way of explanation, that every resemblance of ideas is not that which we call wit, unless it be such an one as gives *delight* and *surprise* to the reader; these two properties seem essential to wit, more particularly the last of them. In order, therefore, that the resemblance in the ideas be wit, it is necessary that the ideas should not lie too near one another in the nature of things; for where the likeness is obvious it gives no surprise. To compare one man's singing to another, or to represent the whiteness of any object by that of milk and snow, or the variety of its colours by those of the rainbow, cannot be called wit, unless, besides this obvious resemblance, there be some further congruity discovered in the two ideas that is capable of giving the reader some surprise. Thus when a poet tells us, the bosom of his mistress is as white as snow, there is no wit in the comparison; but when he adds, with a sigh, that it is as cold too, it then grows into wit.

Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE (1729): Tho perhaps the Talent which we call Wit, like that of Humour, is as clearly understood by its simple

Term, as by the most labour'd Description; an Argument [f]or which is this, That many ingenious Persons, by their unsuccessful Essays to explain it, have rather obscur'd than illustrated its Idea; I will notwithstanding Adventure to give the Definition of it, which, tho it may fall short of Perfection, yet I imagine, will come nearer to it, than any that has yet appear'd. Wit is a Qualification of the Mind, that raises and enlivens cold Sentiments and plain Propositions, by giving them an elegant and surprising Turn. . . . As to its efficient Cause; Wit owes its Production to an extraordinary and peculiar Temperament in the Constitution of the Possessors of it, in which is found a concurrence of regular and exalted Ferments and an Affluence of Animal Spirits refin'd and rectify'd to a great degree of Purity.

ANONYMOUS (1745):

> True Wit's a spark of that Vivific ray
> Whose glory makes the whole Creation gay.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1784): Wit may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *concordia discors*—a combination of dissimilar images or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.

GEORGE CAMPBELL (1796): It is the design of wit to excite in the mind an agreeable surprise, and that arising, not from anything

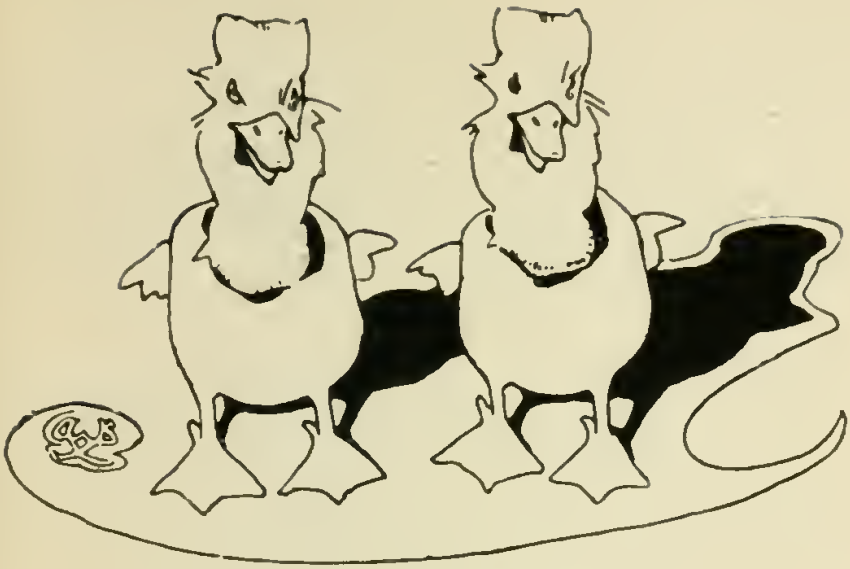
marvellous in the subject, but solely from the imagery she employs, or the strange assemblage of related ideas presented to the mind. This end is effected in one or other of these three ways: first, in debasing things pompous, or seemingly grave: I say *seemingly* grave, because to vilify what is truly grave, has something shocking in it, which rarely fails to counteract the end; secondly, in aggrandising things little and frivolous; thirdly, in setting ordinary objects, by means not only remote but apparently contrary, in a particular and uncommon point of view. . . . Wit and humour commonly concur in a tendency to provoke laughter, by exhibiting a curious and unexpected affinity; the first generally by comparison, either direct or implied, the second by connecting in some other relation, such as casuality or vicinity, objects apparently the most dissimilar and heterogeneous; which incongruous affinity, we may remark by the way, gives the true meaning of the word *oddity*, and is the proper object of laughter.

In case some readers should be struck by the omission from the following pages of the many *mots* of two such famous wits as Samuel Foote and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, I may point out here that they are both fully represented in the first and third volumes of this series.

W. J.

BON-MOTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.





BON-MOTS

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THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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WHEN Addison lived in Kensington Square he is said to have taken considerable pains in studying Montaigne's *Essays*, but at length threw the book aside.

"Well, sir," said a gentleman present, "what do you think of this famous French author?"

"Think," replied he, "why, that a dark dungeon and fetters would probably have been of some service in restoring this author's infirmities."

"How, sir! imprison a man for singularity in writing?"

"Why not," replied Addison, "had he been

a horse he would have been pounded for straying out of his bounds; and why, as a man, he ought to be more favoured I really do not understand."

BANNISTER was complained to by a friend that some malicious person had cut off his horse's tail, which, as he had wished to sell him, must prove a great drawback.

"Not at all," said the actor, "you must now sell him wholesale."

"Wholesale! How so?"

"Because you cannot *re-tail* him."

A PHYSICIAN, observing Bannister about to drink a glass of brandy, said: "Don't drink that filthy stuff; brandy is the worst enemy you have."

"I know that," responded Charles, "but you know we are commanded by Scripture to *love our enemies.*"

BARRYMORE, arriving late at the theatre and having to dress for his part, was driven to desperation because the key of his drawer was missing.

"Damn it!" said he, "I must have swallowed it."

"Never mind," said Jack Bannister, "it will serve to open your *chest*."

—WWW—

BEING caught one day in a shower of rain, the elder Bannister (Charles) went for shelter into a combmaker's shop where an old man was at work.

"I am sorry," said Bannister, after watching him for some time, "that a person at your time of life should have so much pain."

"Pain, I have no pain, thank God!" exclaimed the man.

"But you must have," urged the actor, "are you not cutting your teeth?"

—WWW—

A FRIEND, inquiring of Bannister about a man who had been hanged, was told he was dead.

"And did he continue in the *grocery line*?" enquired the former.

"Oh, no," replied Bannister, "he was in quite a *different line* when he died."

"DO you know what made my voice so melodious?" said a celebrated singer of awkward manners to Bannister.



"No," replied he.

"Why, then, I'll tell you. When I was about fifteen I swallowed, by accident, some train oil."

"Well," retorted Bannister, "I don't think it would have done you any harm if, at the same time, you had *swallowed a dancing master.*"

BANNISTER, being asked his opinion of a new singer who had appeared at Covent Garden, said, "Well, he may be Robin Hood this season, but he will be *robbing* Harris (then manager) the next."

A COUPLE of actors, who had both been tailors, were met under the Piazza, Covent Garden, by Bannister, who addressed them saying, "I never see you two fellows together without being reminded of *Measure for Measure.*"

BANNISTER was informed by a friend that he had written a farce entitled *Fire and Water*.

"I predict its fate," said the actor.

"What fate?" enquired the anxious author.

"What fate!" echoed Bannister, "why, what can fire and water produce but *a hiss?*"

WHEN Bannister had been mercilessly chaffing a fellow actor, someone whispered to him, "the gentleman says he'll blow you up."

"Will he so?" said Charles, "then you know I must *go off*."

SIR JONAH BARRINGTON is responsible for the following good story at the expense of the great orator and wit, Curran: Curran as a boy had heard someone say that any person throwing the skirts of his coat over his head, stooping low, holding out his arms, and creeping along backward, would put the fiercest dog to flight. He accordingly made the attempt upon a miller's dog in the neighbourhood, who would *never let the boys rob the orchard*, but found, to his sorrow, that he had a dog to deal with who did not care which end of a boy went

forward, so as he could get a good bite out of it.

"I pursued the instructions," said Curran, "and, as I had no eyes save those in front, fancied the mastiff was in full retreat; but I was confoundedly mistaken, for at the very moment I thought myself victorious, the enemy attacked my rear, got a reasonable good mouthful out of it, and was fully prepared to take another before I was rescued. Egad! I thought for a time the beast had devoured my *entire centre of gravity*, and that I should never go on a steady perpendicular again.

"Upon my word, Curran," said I, "the mastiff may have left your *centre*, but he could not have left much *gravity* behind him among the bystanders."



DR BARTON was discussing with Dr Nash two volumes on Worcestershire antiquities which the latter had published. He pointed out to the author several shortcomings, and then enquired—

"Pray, doctor, are you not a justice of the peace?"

"I am," replied the other.

"Then," said Barton, "I would advise you to send your work to the *house of correction*."

LORD BATH, on being told of the first determination of turning Pitt out of the ministry and letting Fox remain, said that it put him in mind of a story of the Gunpowder Plot. The Lord Chamberlain was sent to examine the vaults under the House of Parliament, and, returning with his report, said that he had found five and twenty barrels of gunpowder; *he had removed ten of them, and hoped the rest would do no harm.*



TOPHAM BEAUCLERC was by no means the least brilliant of the circle that gathered around Dr Johnson at the Literary Club, and his wit was sometimes equal to that of the best.

"Now that gentleman, Mr Beauclerc, against whom you are so violent," said Boswell one day, eager to please Johnson by defending one of his friends, "is, I know, a man of good principles."

"Then he does not wear them out in practice," quietly retorted Beauclerc.

FOR a short time Goldsmith, availing himself of his medical degree, set up as a fashionable doctor. When attending a lady of his acquaintance, his opinion differed from that of the apothecary already in attendance. The patient thought the apothecary the safer counsellor, and Goldsmith left the house in high dudgeon. He would leave off prescribing for his friends.

"Do so, my dear Doctor," observed Beauclerc; "whenever you undertake to kill, let it only be your enemies."

WHEN Lord Berkeley was dining with Lord Chesterfield, the latter, under the influence of wine, asked the other, referring to a recent accident—

"Pray, my Lord Berkeley, how long is it since you shot a gamekeeper?"

"Not since you *hanged your tutor*, my Lord," was the reply. It was Chesterfield who had brought the notorious Dr Dodd to trial.

SOMEONE having remarked that Dr Johnson's jokes were the rebukes of the righteous, described in Scripture as being like excellent oil.

"Yes," said Burke, "oil of vitriol."

BOSWELL, when a youth, went to the pit of Covent Garden Theatre with Dr Blair, and in a frolic began imitating the lowing of a cow. Immediately the "gods" set up a cry of "Encore the cow! Encore the cow!"

Proud of his success, Boswell attempted to imitate other animals, but failed, when Dr Blair turned to him, saying, "My dear sir, I would confine myself to the *cow*."

SIR WILLIAM BROWNE, a physician, hearing an epigram which had been made by an Oxford professor on George the First's sending a regiment to Oxford and a present of books to Cambridge, immediately retorted impromptu—

"The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
For Tories own no argument but force;
With equal skill to Cambridge books he sent,
For Whigs admit no force but argument."

GEORGE BRUDENEL attended Lord Bute's first levée, which was very crowded. Just as he arrived, someone in the mob said, "What is the matter here?"

"Why," exclaimed Brudenel, "there is a Scotchman got into the Treasury and they can't get him out."

VILLIERS, Duke of Buckingham, was the effectual means of getting a play damned. He was in the stage box at the first performance, and when the hero, in a piece of bombast, exclaimed—

"My wound is great because it is so small,"

the Duke immediately followed the line up with—

"Then 'twould be greater were there none at all."

BURKE, when proceeding with his historic impeachment of Warren Hastings, was interrupted by Major Scott, a small man. "Am I," the orator thundered indignantly, "to be teased by the barking of this *jackal* while I am attacking the royal *tiger* of Bengal?"

OF Lord Thurlow Burke happily said—"He was a sturdy *oak* when at Westminster, and a *willow* at St James's."

THE great orator told Fox that he had once written a tragedy.

"Did you let Garrick see it?" asked Fox.

"No, though I had the folly to *write* it I had the wit to keep it *to myself*."

BURKE gave a vehement denial to Boswell's contention that Croft's *Life of Young* was a successful imitation of Johnson's style: "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson. It has all his pomp, without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength;"—then, after a pause,—"it has all the contortions of the Sibyl—without the inspiration."



WHEN someone spoke of Fox's attachment to France, Burke answered—

"Yes, his attachment has been great and long; for like a cat, he has continued faithful to the house after the family has left it."

WHEN Burke was told of Erskine's opinion on the impeachment of Warren Hastings, he exclaimed with some warmth—

"What! a *nisi-prius* lawyer give an opinion on an impeachment! as well might a rabbit, that breeds fifty times in the year, pretend to understand the gestation of an elephant."

IN the Parliament of 1783 sat a dull member for Hull, one David Hartley, whose long-winded speeches generally tended to empty the House. One day when he had been thus wearisome, having reduced the House from 300 to about 80 persons, half asleep, just at a time when he was supposed to be concluding, he unexpectedly moved that the Riot Act should be read to prove some assertion that he had made.



Burke, who sat close by him, and who had been for an hour and a half bursting with impatience to speak upon the question, finding himself so cruelly disappointed, jumped to his feet, exclaiming: "The Riot Act, my dear friend, the Riot Act! to what purpose? don't you see that the mob has already quietly dispersed?"

This sarcastic wit, increased in effect by Burke's despairing tone, convulsed every person present, except the member for Hull, who persisted in having the Riot Act read by one of the clerks.

BURNS, after his first triumphal visit to the Scotch capital, was asked if the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticism.

"Sir," replied he, "these gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their thread so fine, that it is neither good for weft nor woof."

ON its being observed that persons calling themselves democrats did not hold long together, Burke said, "Birds of prey are not gregarious."

DR BURNEY, author of the happy anagram on the victor of the Nile—"*Honor est a Nilo*" (Horatio Nelson) was a most absent-minded man. On one occasion when he was visiting Nelson he had neglected to take a night-cap, and consequently borrowed one from his host. Before retiring, having put on the cap, he sat down over a book at the table and was shortly alarmed by finding that the cap had caught fire from the candle. He immediately returned the damaged article to Nelson, with the following impromptu verse—

"Take your night-cap again, my good lord, I desire,
I would not retain it a minute;
What belongs to a Nelson, wherever there's *fire*.
Is sure to be instantly *in it*."

JAMES BOSWELL mentioned a scheme which he had of making a tour of the Isle of Man, and writing a full account of it. Burke immediately suggested as a motto for the work—

"The proper study of mankind is *Man!*"

DR BUSBY, who was beneath the common size, was in a coffee room one day addressed by a very tall Irish baronet, who accosted him with—

"May I pass to my seat, O giant?"

"Pass, O pigmy," said the doctor, politely giving way.

"Oh! sir," said the baronet, "my expression alluded to the *size of your intellect.*"

"And my expression, sir, to the *size of yours*," neatly retorted the doctor.

BUSHE had the reputation of a political warrior, and on the formation of the Grenville ministry he apologised for his absence from Court on the ground that he was *cabinet making.* On his return the Chancellor maliciously disclosed the excuse, but Bushe neatly turned it with the retort: "Oh, indeed, my lord, that is an occupation in which my friend would distance me, as I was never a *turner* or a *joiner.*"

WHEN something was said about Burns accepting such a post as that of exciseman, he happily observed: "I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed it from my profession.'

SOMEONE having remarked that the judges of the Court of Common Pleas had little or nothing to do, Bushe quietly remarked, "Well, well, they are *equal to it*."

AFTER a day's hunting George the Third entered into conversation with a wine merchant, one Carbonel by name, and rode with him for some distance. Lord Walsingham, who was in attendance on the King, watched for an opportunity, and then took Carbonel aside and whispered some advice to him.



"What's that? What's that Walshingham has been saying to you?" asked the King.

"I find, sir," replied the wine merchant, "that I have been unintentionally guilty of disrespect; my lord informed me that I ought

to have taken off my hat whenever I addressed your Majesty; but your Majesty will please to observe that, whenever I hunt, my hat is fastened to my wig, and my wig is fastened to my head, and I am on the back of a very high-spirited horse, so that if anything *goes off*, we must *all go off together*."

The King is said to have laughed heartily over the adequate apology.

WHEN Lord Cartaret was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Dean Swift visited the Castle, and having waited for some time without seeing him, wrote upon one of the windows of the audience chamber :—

"My very good lord, 'tis a very hard task
For a man to wait here who has nothing to ask."

Under this Cartaret wrote the following reply, especially happy in view of the fact that Swift's *Drapier's Letters* were then being published :—

"My very good Dean, there are few who come here
But have something to ask *or something to fear*."

SOMEONE having stolen Lord Chatham's large "gouty" shoes, his servant began to make a great fuss. "Never mind," said the Earl, "all the harm I wish the rogue is, that the shoes may *fit him*."

THE Earl of Chatham, who bore no good will to a certain physician, was rallying him one day about the value of his prescriptions. To which the doctor replied that he defied any of his patients to find fault with him.

"I believe you," replied the Earl, "for they are all dead!"

WHEN the Ministers of 1766 sought the confidence of Lord Chatham, he replied that their characters were fair enough, and he was always glad to see such persons engaged in the public service; but, turning to them with a smile, very courteous, but not very respectful, he said—

"*Confide* in you? Oh, no—you must pardon me, gentlemen—*youth* is the season of credulity—confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom."

CHATHAM was one of a party at whist when a player, with a bitter oath, declared that he had the *worst hand* in the company. His lordship said that he *had a worse*, when a considerable bet was proposed and accepted. Lord Chatham then drew off his glove and showed his *gouty* hand, and the company unanimously pronounced in his favour.

THE Earl of Chatham, when Mr Pitt, in a debate with a political opponent, made some points by referring to that opponent's personal appearance. The member criticised arose and complained bitterly of the abuse; declared that he could not help his looks: "the honourable gentleman finds fault with my features; how would he have me look?"

"The honourable gentleman," said Pitt, starting to his feet, "asks me how I would have him look? I would have him look as he ought, if he could; I would have him look as he cannot, if he would; I would have him look like an *honest man*."

A BIBULOUS friend informed Lord Chesterfield that he had drank six bottles of wine.

"Hm!" said Chesterfield, with a grave face, "that is more than I can *swallow*."

LORD CHESTERFIELD, hearing it remarked that man is the only creature endowed with the power of laughter, remarked, "True, and it may be added he is the only creature that deserves to be laughed at."

AN old gentleman who frequently encountered Chatterton at the Cyder Cellars, one evening requested the pleasure of the poet's company to supper at his house. After the meal some very sour wine was placed on the table. This the host praised extravagantly as he was filling Chatterton's glass, requesting him at the same time to drink a bumper to the memory of Shakespeare.



The youth had not finished his glass when tears stood in his eyes.

"God bless me!" said the old gentleman, "you are in tears, Mr Chatterton."

"Yes, sir," said the poet, "this dead wine of yours compels me to shed tears, but, by heaven, they are not the tears of veneration!"

ONE of the last times the Earl of Chesterfield was at Court, a Miss Chudleigh and another lady went up to him, and after an exchange of civilities, one of them said to the witty Earl—

"Now, my lord, I suppose we shall hear of our faults and follies."

"No, no," replied Chesterfield. "Not so; I never choose to talk of what all the town talks about."

A FLURRIED official rushed into Lord Chesterfield's room exclaiming, "They're rising in Connaught!"

"Well, sir," said Chesterfield, coolly looking at his watch, "it's nine o'clock, and they ought to be."

WHEN Whitfield became widely popular, it was debated in "high places," what should be done to stop his preaching. Lord Chesterfield, being present, turned upon his heel, saying, "Make him a Bishop and you will silence him at once."

IT being asked whether the piers of the new Westminster Bridge were to be of stone or wood, Lord Chesterfield promptly said, "Oh, of stone, to be sure, for we have too many wooden *peers* at Westminster already."

LORD CHESTERFIELD having proposed a certain person to fill a place of great trust, the king expressed his desire to appoint someone else. The Council, however, resolved not to indulge the King for fear of creating a dangerous precedent, and it became the duty

of Chesterfield to present the grant of office for signature. Not to notify this too abruptly he diplomatically begged to know with whose name his majesty would be pleased to have the blanks filled up.

"With the *devil's*," said the king in a rage.

"And," said the Earl coolly, "shall the instrument run as usual—*Our trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor?*"

The King laughed heartily, it is reported, at the courtier's wit, and signed the grant.

BEFORE Lord Melcombe was elevated to the peerage his name was Bubb. When it was proposed to send him as Ambassador to Spain, he happened to meet Lord Chesterfield, who informed him that he was not a fit person to represent England at the Spanish Court, on account of the brevity of his name, as the Dons pride themselves on the length of their titles, "unless" added Lord Chesterfield, "you choose to call yourself *Silly-Bubb?*"

ON being informed that a noted termagant had married a notorious gamester, Chesterfield remarked that *cards and brimstone* made the best matches.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil* being praised by a bishop, Lord Chesterfield readily commented: "The original is indeed excellent; but everything suffers by a *translation*—except a *bishop!*"

THE Corporation of Bath placed a full-sized picture of Beau Nash in the pump room between the busts of Newton and Pope. Lord Chesterfield on hearing of this promptly uttered the following witty epigram :—

"Immortal Newton never spoke
More truth than here you'll find;
Nor Pope himself ne'er penned a joke
Severer on mankind.

This picture placed the busts between,
Adds to the satire strength;
Wisdom and wit are little seen
But folly at full length."

DINING at a tavern Lord Chesterfield complained that the plates and dishes were very dirty.

"It is said that every one must *eat a peck of dirt* before he dies," coolly observed the waiter.

"That may be true," said the enraged customer, "but no one is obliged to eat it all *at one meal*, you dirty dog."



WHEN Chesterfield called upon the Duke of Newcastle, his Grace happened to be engaged and the Earl was asked to take a seat in an ante-room. The only book at hand was *Garnet upon Job*, a book dedicated to the Duke. On entering the room his Grace found his visitor so busy reading that he asked him what he thought of the book.

"In any other place, I should not think much of it," replied Chesterfield; "but there is so much *propriety* in putting a volume upon *patience* in the room where every visitor is to wait for your Grace, that *here* it must be considered one of the *best books in the world*."

ON the occasion of a certain society marriage Chesterfield said that "Nobody's son had married Everybody's daughter."

CHESTERFIELD was with Voltaire at a fashionable rout at Paris, when the latter enquired—

"My lord, I know you are a judge: which are more beautiful, the English or the French ladies?"

"Upon my word," replied Chesterfield, "I am no connoisseur of *paintings*."

OF a lackadaisical couple dancing a minuet, Lord Chesterfield remarked that "they looked as if they were hired to do it, and were doubtful of being paid."

LONG Sir Thomas Robinson, so named to distinguish him from another baronet of the same name, asked Lord Chesterfield for some verses upon him. He immediately received the following epigram—

"Unlike my subject now shall be my song;
It shall be witty, and it shan't be *long*."

LORD CHESTERFIELD and a friend were paying a morning visit, when just as the latter had stepped out of the carriage, a great lamp, which hung in the centre of an iron arch before the door, fell, and missed the gentleman but by half-an-inch.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed he, "I was near being gone!"

"Why yes," said his witty companion coolly, "but there would have been one comfort attending such an accident, that you would have had *extreme unction* before you went."

QUIN, Cibber, and some other players were gathered together one evening when each was rallied by the others on account of his infirmities.



"What in the name of wonder," said Quin to Cibber, "could ever make you think yourself a proper figure for the stage—a snuffling fellow without a nose, and a pair of bandy legs?"

"As to my nose," replied Cibber, "I give it up, but I'll lay a bottle of claret there's a worse leg in the company than this," producing his right leg.

Everyone smiled contemptuously, thinking it an insult to accept such a challenge.

"Why then," said he, producing his other leg, "*there's a worse*," which sure enough it was.

IT is related of a celebrated physician, Dr Clarke, that when he was enjoying himself in frolicsome mood with a few kindred spirits and observed Beau Nash approaching, he suddenly stopped, saying, "My boys, let us be *grave*, here comes a *fool!*"

THEOPHILUS CIBBER, who was very extravagant, asked his father one day for a large sum of money.

"Zounds, sir," said Colley, "can't you live upon your salary? When I was your age I never spent a farthing of my father's money."

"But you have spent a great deal of my father's," retorted Theophilus, and gained his end.

AN Irish barrister pleading before Lord Clare got hopelessly mixed over a metaphor in which he had introduced an eagle, and at length had abruptly to stop.

"The next time, sir," said the Chancellor, "that you bring an eagle into court, I recommend you to *clip his wings*."

COLLINS, the poet, having arrived in town the day after a young lady, of whom he was particularly fond, had left it, lamented his want of luck in coming *a day after the fair*.

"I LIVE in Julia's eyes," said an affected love-sick swain, in Colman's hearing.

"I don't wonder at it," said he, "since I observed she had a *sty* in them when I saw her last."

GEORGE COLMAN, being once told that a man whose character was not above reproach had grossly abused him, pointedly said that "the scandal and ill-report of some persons that might be mentioned was like fuller's earth, it *daubs your coat* a little for a time, but when it is *rubbed off*, your coat is so much the cleaner."

WHEN Colman was in his last illness the doctor who was attending him arrived late one day, and apologised by saying that he had been called in to see a man who had tumbled down a well.

"Did he *kick the bucket*, doctor," groaned the irrepressible humourist.

THE wit often formed one of the company of *bon vivants* and men of spirit who gathered about the dinner table of Dr Kitchener. Over the mantelpiece in his dining-room the doctor had inscribed "Come at seven, go at eleven." Colman, arriving early on the scene, interpolated a brief monosyllable which made the legend run—and we are informed that the guests acted up to it—"Come at seven, *go it* at eleven."



A YOUNG man in company being pressed very hard to sing, even after he had said that he could not, observed indignantly that they were wanting to make a butt of him.

"Not at all, my good sir," said Colman, "we merely want to get *a stave* out of you.

COLMAN was dining with Lord Erskine when the latter happened to remark that he owned then about three thousand head of sheep.

"Ah!" interrupted Colman, "I perceive that your lordship has still an eye to the woolsack."

AS Cunningham, the poet, was fishing on a Sunday near Durham the reverend (and corpulent) Mr Brown, who chanced to pass by, severely reproached him for breaking the Sabbath, telling him that he was doubly reprehensible in that his good sense should have taught him better.

"Your external appearance, reverend sir," replied the poet, "says that if your dinner was at the bottom of the river with mine, you would angle for it though it were a fast day and your Saviour stood by to rebuke you."

COUNSELLOR CRIPS and a medical friend were dining at a nobleman's seat in Ireland, when the doctor strolled out into the churchyard before dinner. The meal being served and the doctor not returned some surprise was expressed.

"Oh, he has but just stepped out to pay a visit to some of *his old patients*," said the lawyer.

SAID a certain Irish judge, whose disposition may be guessed from his nickname of "the hanging Judge," to the witty barrister at a dinner table.

"Pray, Mr Curran, is that hung beef beside you? If it is, I will try it."

"If you try it, my lord, it's sure *to be hung*," replied Curran.

CURRAN, owing to Lord Clare's hostility, lost much of his business in the Court of Chancery, and had consequently to resume *nisi-prius* business. Speaking of this, he said: "I had been under full sail to fortune; but the tempest came and nearly wrecked me, and ever since I have been only bearing up under *jury* masts."

WHEN in talk with Sir Thomas Turton, Curran happened to say that he could never speak in public over a quarter of an hour without moistening his lips.



"There," said Sir Thomas, "I have the advantage of you, for I spoke the other night in the House of Commons for five hours, on the Nabob of Oude, and never felt in the least thirsty."

"It *is* very remarkable, indeed," rejoined Curran, "for everyone agrees that was the *driest* speech of the session."

LORD CLARE was always opposed to Curran, and ever ready to slight him. One day the judge had his dog with him in court, and during the counsel's speech turned aside and caressed the animal. Curran immediately stopped.

"Go on, go on, Mr Curran," said Lord Clare.

"Oh, I beg a thousand pardons," was the retort, "I really thought your lordship was employed *in consultation*."

A COUNTRYMAN who disputed a bill was being examined by Curran, who asked, "Did he not give you the coals, friend?"

"He did, sir, but——"

"But what? On your oath, witness, was not your payment *slack?*"

"IT appears to me," said a judge in a will dispute, "that the testator meant to keep *a life-interest* in the estate to himself."

"Very true, my lord," said Curran in the gravest manner, "but in this case I rather think your lordship *takes the will for the deed.*"

CURRAN once laid a neat little trap for Lord Avonmore, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who was much addicted to anticipating what anyone addressing him was about to say.

"Coming through the market just now," said the witty orator in an alarmed tone, "I saw a butcher with his knife, going to kill a calf; at that moment a child ran across, and he killed——"

"Oh my goodness!—he killed *the child!*" exclaimed his lordship.

"No, my lord, *the calf;* but you will anticipate."

A BARRISTER, having entered the Court with his wig awry and having endured chaff from a number of persons he met, at length addressed himself to Curran, saying—

"Do *you* see anything ridiculous in this wig?'

"Nothing but *the head*," was the reply.

CURRAN, having made a statement in support of one of his cases, Lord Clare curtly exclaimed—

"Oh! if that be law, Mr Curran, I may burn my law-books!"

"Better *read* them, my lord," was the sly rejoinder.

IT was of Lord Clare, too, that Curran, who was a political antagonist, said that he reminded him of a chimney-sweep, who had raised himself by dark and dusky ways, and then called aloud to his neighbours to witness his *dirty* elevation.

HEARING that a stingy and slovenly barrister had started for the Continent with a shirt and a guinea, Curran promptly observed, "He'll not *change* either till he comes back."

CURRAN, having quarrelled with another barrister, ended by calling him out. Now Curran was a very small man and his opponent, who was a very stout one, objected, saying: "You are so little that I might fire at you a dozen times without hitting, whereas, the chance is that you may shoot me at the first fire."



"To convince you that I don't wish to take any advantage," said Curran, "you shall *chalk* my size on *your body* and all hits out of the ring shall go for nothing."

THE stupid foreman of a jury enquired of a judge how he and his fellows were to ignore a bill.

"Write," said Curran, "*Ignoramus for self and fellows* on the back of it."

DURING Curran's last illness his physician observed one morning that he coughed with more difficulty.

"That is rather surprising," said he, "as I have been *practising* all night."

"THE mortality among Byron's mistresses," said a lady to Curran, "is really alarming. I think he generally buries, in verse, a first love every fortnight."

"Madam," answered the wit, "mistresses are not so mortal. The fact is, my lord weeps for the *press* and wipes his eyes with the *public*."

THE witty barrister was at Cheltenham when his friends drew attention to a fashionable Irish gentleman who had the ugly habit of keeping his tongue exposed as he went along. On being asked what his countryman's motive could be, Curran readily hazarded the reply: "Oh! he's evidently trying *to catch* the English accent."

AN Irish attorney, who had the misfortune to be very lame, was fired with military ardour during a time of trouble. Among the different volunteer corps which were being formed, one of lawyers was being organised. The lame attorney, Macnally by name, meeting Curran, remarked—

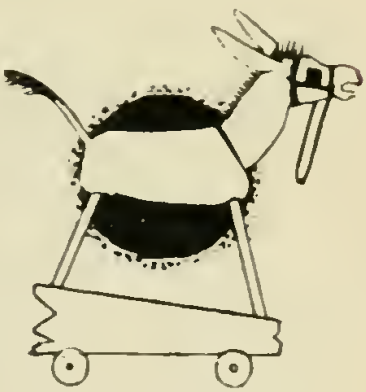
"My dear friend, these are not times for a man to be idle; I am determined to enter the lawyer's corps, and follow the camp."

"You follow the camp, my little limb of the law?" said Curran; "tut, tut! renounce the idea; you never can be a disciplinarian."

"And why not, Mr Curran?"

"For this reason: the moment you were ordered to march, you would *halt!*"

DURING a case in which Curran was concerned, and while he was addressing the jury, an ass brayed, whereupon the judge interposed—



"One at a time, Mr Curran, if you please."

Later on, when the judge was summing up, the donkey was again heard braying outside, whereupon Curran seized the opportunity of a retort, and inquired of the judge—

"Does not your lordship hear a remarkable *echo in the court?*"

IN cross-examining Lundy Foot, a notable Irish tobacconist, Curran put a question at which the witness hesitated a good deal.

"Lundy," said the counsel, "that's a poser—a deuce of a *pinch*, Lundy!"

A CERTAIN actor, known for his meanness, billeted himself during a professional visit to Dublin upon all his acquaintances in the town.

Later on in the year he encountered Curran in London, and, referring to *his great expenses*, asked the wit what he supposed he had spent during his visit to the Irish capital.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Curran, "but probably *a fortnight*."

CROSS-EXAMINING the plaintiff's chief witness in an action for assault, Curran made him admit that the plaintiff had put his arm round Miss D.'s waist, which had provoked the defendant to strike him.

"Then, sir," said Curran, "I presume he took that *waist* for *common?*"

CURRAN, rising in court to reply to the rambling statement of opposing counsel, once said: "My learned friend's speech puts me exactly in mind of a familiar utensil in domestic use, commonly called an *extinguisher*. It began at a point, and on it went widening and widening, until at last it fairly put the question out altogether."

HAVING had a violent discussion with a schoolmaster, Curran worsted him, and the pedagogue, loth to admit his defeat, said, with an evident show of temper, that he would lose no more time, but must return to his scholars.



"Do, my dear doctor," said the witty barrister, "*but don't indorse my sins upon their backs.*"

WHEN Lundy Foot, the tobacconist, set up his coach, he asked Curran to suggest a motto for it.

"I have just hit on it," said the wit; "it is only two words, and it will explain your profession, your elevation, and contempt for the people's ridicule; and it has the advantage of being in two languages, Latin and English, just as the reader chooses. Put up '*Quid rides*' upon your carriage."

CURRAN'S hatred of the Union is shown in his answer to a peer who got his title for supporting the Government measure.

Meeting the orator near the Parliament House on College Green, his lordship said to him—

"What do they mean to do with this useless building? For my part, I hate the very sight of it."

"I do not wonder at it, my lord," said Curran; "I never yet heard of a *murderer* who was not afraid of a *ghost*."

A RICH barrister who had no over-plus of brains once said sententiously that "No one should be admitted to the Bar who had not an independent landed property."

"And pray, sir," said the wit, "may I ask how many acres make a *wise-acre?*"

TOM MOORE having told Curran of a florid orator, the wit replied—

"My dear Tom, it will never do for a man to turn painter merely upon the strength of having a pot of colours by him, unless he knows how to lay them on."

RISING to cross-examine a witness before a learned judge who could not comprehend a jest, Curran observed that he began to laugh before a single question had been asked.

"What are you laughing at, friend?" asked Curran; "what are you laughing at? Let me tell you that a laugh without a joke is like—is like——"

"Like what, Mr Curran?" interposed the judge, imagining he was at fault.

"Just exactly, my lord, like a *contingent remainder* without any particular *estate* to support it."

A CERTAIN barrister having an objectionable insect on his face in court, Curran drew his attention to it. The other replied indignantly—

"Surely, Curran, you joke."

"Joke, sir," said the wit; "by Jove! if you have many such jokes as that in your head, I would advise you to *crack* them immediately."

ASKED for a definition of "Nothing," Curran said: "Nothing defines it better than a footless boot without a leg, or a bodiless shirt without neck or sleeves.

OF a learned serjeant who gave a confused explanation of some point of law, Curran remarked that "Whenever that grave counsellor endeavoured to unfold a principle of law, he put him in mind of a fool whom he once saw trying to open an oyster with a rolling-pin."

SHORTLY after Curran was called to the Bar, the following passage at arms took place between the young counsel and Judge Robinson (the author of a number of stupid political pamphlets). The judge having observed something, Curran remarked "that he had never met the law as laid down by his lordship in any book in his library."

"That may be, sir," said the judge blandly, "but I suspect that your library is very small."

"I find it more instructive, my lord," retorted the daring young barrister, "to study good works than to compose bad ones. My books may be few, but the title-pages give me the writer's name, and my shelf is not disgraced by any such rank absurdities that their very authors are ashamed to own them."

"Sir," said the judge, "you are forgetting the respect which you owe to the dignity of the judicial character."

"Dignity!" exclaimed Curran; "my lord, upon that point I shall cite you a case from



a book of some authority, with which you are, perhaps, not unacquainted." He then briefly cited the case of Strap in *Roderick Random*, who having stripped off his coat to fight, entrusted it to a bystander. When the battle was over, and he was well beaten, he turned to resume it but the man had carried it off. "So, my lord," continued the imperturbable counsel, "when the person entrusted with the dignity of the judgment seat lays it aside for a moment to enter into a disgraceful personal contest, it is in vain when he has been worsted in the encounter that he seeks to resume it—it is in vain that he tries to shelter himself behind an authority which he has abandoned."

"If you say another word, I'll commit you," declared the angry judge.

"If your lordship shall do so," retorted Curran, "we shall both of us have the consolation of reflecting that I am not the worst thing your lordship has committed."

DECLAIMING against the spies brought up from prisons after the rebellion of '98, Curran finally spoke of "Those catacombs of living death, where the wretch that is buried a man lies till the heart has time to fester and dissolve, and is then dug up an informer."

WHEN defending the prisoners during the same trial he was reminded by Lord Carleton that he would lose his gown.

"Well, my lord," Curran retorted with scorn, "his Majesty may take the silk, but he must leave the *stuff* behind."

OF a pompous and solemn blockhead who concealed his insignificance under a most ludicrous gravity, Curran observed: "If you had dined and breakfasted with him for a hundred years you could not be intimate with him. By heavens! he would not even be seen to smile, lest the world should think he was familiar with himself."

UPON an action of assault and battery, an advocate was anxiously and warmly laying out the case of his client, which he said he took up upon principle—for, that he had sustained a gross insult aggravated by circumstances of unnecessary cruelty.

"In short," said he, "I have pledged myself to plead this cause with all the learning, all the law, and all the credit I have."

"That's right," said Sergeant Davy, "the man who pledges himself to nothing may easily keep his word."

A TALL and portly Irish barrister remarked to the diminutive Curran—

"If you go on so I'll put you in my pocket."

"Egad! if you do, you'll have more law in your pocket than ever you had in your head," was the neat retort.

SERGEANT DAVY, being concerned in a cause which he wanted put off for a few days, asked Lord Mansfield when he would bring it on.



"Friday next," said the judge.

"Will you consider, my lord, Friday next will be Good Friday."

"I do not care for that," said the judge petulantly, "I shall sit for all that."

"Well, my lord, to be sure you may do as you please; but if you do, I believe you will be the first judge to do business on Good Friday since Pontius Pilate."

VISITING France a year or two before his death, Curran wrote in pencil on the column which Napoleon erected near Boulogne to commemorate his anticipated invasion of England :—

"When ambition achieves its desire,
How Fortune must laugh at the joke ;
He rose in a pillar of fire,
To set in a pillar of smoke."

RETORTING upon a speaker who had given utterance to a piece of empty self-glorification, Curran said : "The honourable and learned gentleman boasts that he is the guardian of his own honour—I wish him joy of *his sinecure*."

SHORTLY after the elder Pitt had changed his political opinions in regard to the protection of Hanover, he was replying in debate to Sir Francis Delaval, when he threw out several sarcasms at the expense of the member who had appeared on the stage.

Delaval immediately rose, and neatly retorted by saying that he could lay his hand upon his heart and say *he* never acted but *one part*."

IT was expected when Sir Richard Steele became a member of the House of Commons that he would distinguish himself as an orator. This he failed to do, and thus called forth De Foe's happy remark: "He had better have continued the *Spectator* than started the *Tatler*."

SAMUEL DERRICK, who was an Irish friend of Goldsmith's, succeeded Beau Nash as master of the ceremonies at Bath. In his earlier days he attended with Goldsmith the meetings of the Robin Hood Debating Society. On their first visit, Goldsmith, struck by the imposing aspect of the chairman, said he thought nature must have destined him for a lord chancellor.

"No, no," whispered Derrick, who knew him to be a wealthy city baker, "only for a master of the rolls."

WHEN William the Third, as Prince of Orange, came to England, five of the seven Bishops who were sent to the Tower declared in his favour, but the other two refused. Upon learning this Dryden said that "the seven golden candlesticks were sent to be assayed in the Tower, and five of them proved *prince's metal*."

THE celebrated miser Elwes said that "If you keep *one* servant, your work is done; if you keep *two*, it is half done; but if you keep *three*, you may *do it yourself*."

LORD ERSKINE, speaking of animals, and hesitating to call them brutes, hit upon that happy phrase—the mute creation.

ERSKINE had been examining an impenetrably stupid witness in a case brought to recover the value of a consignment of whalebone. The defence turned on the quality delivered, and the one point to be settled was, was it long whalebone or was it thick whalebone? Erskine could make nothing of the witness and at length said:



"Why, man, you don't seem to know the difference between what is thick and what is long. Now I'll tell you the difference. You are a thick-headed fellow, and you are not a long-headed one."

PUNNING, said a friend to Erskine, is the *lowest* of wit.

"It is," answered he, "and therefore the *foundation* of all wit."

WHEN Erskine heard that somebody had died worth two hundred thousand pounds, he observed: "Well, that's a very pretty sum to begin the next world with."

MEETING a barrister of his acquaintance, one who dealt in long words and circumlocutions, Erskine perceived that his ankle was tied up with a silk handkerchief, and enquired the reason.

"Why, my dear fellow," said the verbose friend, "I was taking a romantic ramble in my brother's grounds, when, coming to a gate, I had to climb over it, by which I came in contact with the first bar, and have grazed the epidermis on my skin, attended with a slight extravasation of blood."

"You may thank your lucky stars," said Erskine, "that your brother's *gate* was not as *lofty* as your *style*, or you must have broken your neck."

ERSKINE described the devil to a friend as "a great celestial statesman out of place!"

THE witty lawyer displayed great readiness in a case of breach of warranty. A horse had been taken on trial and had become dead lame, and in his evidence the witness said the animal had a cataract in his eye.

"A singular proof of lameness," remarked the opposition counsel sarcastically.

"It is cause and effect," said Erskine, "for what is a cataract but a fall?"

ERSKINE said it was comforting to remember that when the hour came when all secrets should be revealed, then, at length, we should learn—why shoes are always made too tight!

VERY neat was Erskine's punning epigram on gout.

"The French have taste in all they do,
Which we are quite without;
For Nature that to them gave *goût*,
To us gave only gout."

BOSWELL, having presented Erskine to Dr Johnson, was surprised, and we may imagine a bit mortified, when the former slipped a shilling into his hand, whispering that it was for a sight of his *bear*.

WHEN Erskine was on circuit he was asked by the landlord of the inn at which he had put up how he had slept.



"Well," he replied, "union is strength—a fact of which your inmates seem to be unaware; for, had the fleas been unanimous last night, they might have pushed me out of bed."

"Fleas!" exclaimed Boniface in well simulated astonishment, "I was not aware that there was a single one in the house."

"I don't believe you have," retorted the judge, "they are all married and have uncommonly large families."

DR PARR said to Erskine at one of their social meetings, "Erskine, I mean to write your epitaph when you die."

"Doctor," replied the ex-Chancellor, "it is almost a temptation to commit suicide."

EXAMINING a bumptious witness Erskine asked him if he were not a rider?

"I'm a *traveller*, sir," replied the offended man with needless emphasis.

"Indeed, sir. And pray are you addicted to the *failing* usually attributed to travellers."

ON Erskine receiving his appointment to succeed Dundas as Justiciary in Scotland, he observed that he must go and order his silk robe.

"Never mind," said Dundas, "for the short time you will require it you had better borrow mine."

"No," retorted Erskine, "no matter for how short a time soever I may need it, Heaven forbid that I begin my career by adopting the *abandoned habits* of my predecessor."



"ARE we never again to enjoy the honour and pleasure of your Grace's society at Edinburgh?" asked Henry Erskine of the Duchess of Gordon.

"Oh!" answered she, "Edinburgh is a vile dull place—I hate it."

"Madam," returned the gallant barrister, "the sun might as well say, there's a vile dark morning—I *won't rise* to-day."



HASTENING out of the House one evening, Erskine was stopped by a member going in, with the question—

"Who's up, Erskine?"

"Windham," was the reply.

"What's he on?"

"*His legs.*"

A MR BOLT, as defendant in a case, was represented by Erskine; the former's character being impugned, the latter addressed the jury saying—



"Gentlemen, the plaintiff's counsel has taken unwarrantable liberties with my client's good name, representing him as being litigious and unjust. So far, however, from this being his character he goes by the name of *Bolt upright.*"

FAWCETT, meeting a fellow-actor, inquired:

"How are you this morning?"

"Not at all myself," answered the other.

"Then I congratulate you," said Fawcett, "for, be whoever *else* you will, *you* will be a gainer by the bargain."

A CERTAIN author informed Foote that a passage which he found fault with might be justified as a metaphor.

"Is it so," said Foote, "then it is such a one as truly I never *met-a-fore.*"

ERSKINE was opposed once in a case to Counsellor Lamb, an old man of a nervous temperament who was wont to begin his pleadings by drawing attention to his own timidity. Lamb having said that "he felt himself growing more and more timid as he grew older."

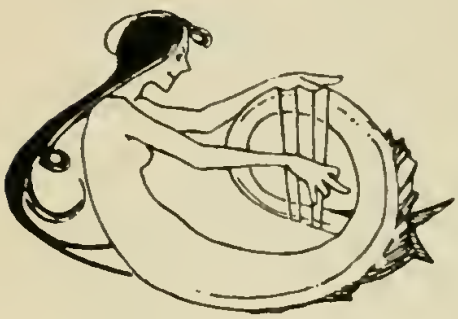
"No wonder," readily remarked his witty opponent, "every one knows that the older a lamb grows the more sheepish it becomes."

WHEN Scott had secured his Clerkship of Session, Erskine made a very neat remark on the appointment. The post was to have been bestowed on him by the Tories, but was really given by the Whigs, and after the fall of the latter, Erskine meeting Scott, congratulated him on his appointment, which he liked all the better as it was the "Lay of the *last Ministry!*"

ERSKINE is reported to have had the following regular form of reply to all letters appealing for subscriptions :—

"Sir, I feel much honoured by your application to me and beg to subscribe (here the correspondent had to turn over the leaf) myself, your very obedient servant, etc."

ERSKINE fired off a double-barrelled pun when he encountered a friend named Malem at Ramsgate. The latter observed that his doctor had ordered him not to bathe.



"Oh, then, you are *Malum prohibitum*," said Erskine.

"My wife, however, does bathe," added the other.

"Oh, then," said Erskine delightedly, "she is *Malum in se*."

FOOTE appeared as a fool, at a masquerade where there were several ladies attired as Diana, one of whom, pointing to his costume, said—

"So, Mr Fool, we seem to be all in *character* here."

"No, madam," retorted he, "for if we were, there would be more *fools* and no *Dianas*."

A VERY neat charade was propounded by Fox: "I would not be my first for all of my second that is contained in my third."

The answer is Scotland.

SOON after Wilkes was chosen as Sheriff, Foote met him wearing his chain of office, and said that he could have saved him that expense.

"How so?" asked Wilkes.

"Why, Garrick would have lent you the chain of his meat-jack, for *he never uses it!*"

OF Lord Thurlow Fox said: "I suppose no one ever was so wise as Thurlow *looks*—that is impossible."

CHARLES JAMES FOX was asked by a friend to explain the meaning of that passage in the *Psalms:* "He clothed himself with cursing, like as with a garment."

"The meaning, I think, is clear enough," said he; "the man had a *habit* of swearing."

OF his uncle, Fox, Lord Holland has recorded: When helping him into bed a night or two before he died I said, "O passi graviora: dabit Deus his quoque finem"—he replied: "Aye, young one, but *finem* is an awkward word in more senses than one."

ON one of the many occasions on which Charles James Fox was importuned by his creditors, he told the unwelcome visitors that he would discharge his debt as soon as possible.



"But, Mr Fox, name the day."

"The Day of Judgment," readily suggested the politician.

"Oh, Mr Fox, that will be too busy a day for us."

"All right, Moses," said the accommodating debtor, "*we will make it the day after!*"

FOX having applied to a Westminster shopkeeper for his vote and interest, the man produced a *halter* with which he said he was ready to oblige him. The candidate courteously thanked him for his kindness, but said he would by no means deprive him of it, as he presumed it was a family heirloom.

LORD NORTH was exulting over Charles Fox on the news in an extra-*Gazette*, of New York being conquered, when the witty politician retorted:

"It is a mistake, my lord, New York is not conquered; it is only like the Ministry—*abandoned*."

BURKE and Fox, supping one evening at the Thatched House, were served with dishes more elegant than usual, when the latter, whose appetite was keen and demanded something more substantial than the elaborate kickshaws before him, exclaimed :

"Egad, Burke, these dishes are admirably calculated for your palate, they are both *sublime* and *beautiful!*"

GARRICK was visiting Lord Lyttelton at Hagley when news was received that a company of players were going to perform at Birmingham.

"They will hear you are in the neighbourhood," said the nobleman to his guest, "and will ask you to write an address to the Birmingham audience."

"Suppose then," said Garrick, "I begin thus :—

'Ye sons of iron, copper, brass, and steel,
Who have not heads to think, nor hearts to feel.'"

"Oh! if you begin thus," said Lyttelton, "they will hiss the players off the stage, and pull the house down."

"My lord," said the actor, "what is the use of an address if it does not come home to the *business* and *bosoms* of the audience."

SOME time before Lord Holland's trip to the Continent, when the public defaulter was the general subject of conversation, as he and his second son were driving to Holland House, he asked, "What the world thought of him?"

Fox excused himself for some time, observing he might be angry with him if he told the truth, which his father promised he should not, let it be what it might.



"Why then, sir," said Fox, "they say that there is not a greater rogue unhanged."

"And pray, sir," said Lord Holland, "where is your spirit not to resent such an injury?"

"My lord," replied the son, "I should by no means want spirit to resent any injury offered to my father, as I look upon it the same as to myself; nor should any *single* person dare to mention it with impunity. But surely, my lord, you would not have me fight *everybody*."

ONE night at Brookes's, Fox happened to make some remark on government gunpowder; Adams considered it a reflection and at once challenged him. The two duly met, and the burly Fox took his station, giving a full front. One of the seconds said, "You must stand sideways."

"Why, I am as thick one way as the other," objected the politician.

The word was given to "fire," which Adams did, although Fox refrained, and when told he must do so, merely retorted: "I'll be damned if I do. I have no quarrel."

The principals then advanced to shake hands, when Fox quietly observed: "Adams, you'd have killed me *if it had not been government powder.*' He was wounded, but not severely.

GARRICK and Quin had been performing together one night, and as they were about to leave the theatre, each ordered a chair as it was a stormy evening. Garrick's chair arrived first and the elder actor was indignant.

"Let me get into the chair," said he, "and put little Davy in the lantern."

"By all means," promptly retorted Garrick, "I shall ever be happy *to enlighten* Mr Quin in anything."

THE famous actor and a friend were walking once in Norfolk when they noticed the following inscription on a house—"A goes koored hear."

"How is it possible," said the friend, "that such people as these can cure agues?"

"I do not know," replied Garrick, "what their prescription is—but *it is not by a spell.*"

LAURENCE STERNE, the sentimentalist, who was credited with treating his wife in an ill fashion, was talking to Garrick one day in a fine manner in praise of conjugal love and fidelity.

"The husband," said he, "who behaves unkindly to his wife, deserves to have his house burnt over his head."

"If you think so," said Garrick, "I hope *your* house is insured."

STERNE, talking with Garrick, said that those authors whose works abound with indelicate allusions ought, as a warning to others, to be hung up before their own houses.

"It is well for you, doctor," said Garrick, "if such is to be the law, that you live in lodgings."



THERE was a fine full-length portrait of Garrick as Richard the Third in one of the exhibitions at the Royal Academy. One morning as the actor was going downstairs from the exhibition room, he met a nobleman of his acquaintance who enquired how he did.

"Why faith, my lord," said Garrick, "I'm but *so-so* this morning; but if your lordship will walk upstairs you will see me as *well* as ever I was in my life."

BURKE insisted in conversation that all *bitter* things were *hot.*

"Is that so, Mr Burke," enquired Garrick, "then how about *bitter cold weather?*"

A DOCTOR who attended Garrick for some time had accustomed himself to expect large fees, and even from the penurious manager he obtained two guineas a visit. Garrick at length decided to pay but one guinea, and having done so, on the termination of a visit, the physician looked about him as though in search of something. Garrick enquired if he had lost anything.

"Sir," replied the doctor, "I believe I have dropped a guinea."

"No, doctor," said Garrick "it is I that have *dropped a guinea.*"

GARRICK neatly summed up the works of a play-writing doctor, Sir John Hill:—

"For physic and farces
Thy equal there scarce is;
Thy farces are physic,
Thy physic a farce is."

PALMER, one of the most popular actors at Drury Lane, began life as a theatrical bill-sticker. When, however, he had made his mark it was observed that he was given to making a great display of the many jewels he had acquired.

"Ah," remarked Garrick, "I can remember the time when he carried *nothing but paste*."

DR GARTH, arriving at the Kit-Kat Club one evening, declared that he could not stay, as he had a number of patients to visit. Some good wine being presently brought in, he speedily forgot his patients. When Steele reminded him of them, Garth immediately said:

"It's no great matter whether I see them to-night or not; for nine of them have such *bad* constitutions that all the physicians in the world can't save them, and the other six have so *good* constitutions that all the physicians in the world can't kill them."

GEORGE THE SECOND having expressed high admiration of General Wolfe, some one remarked that the distinguished officer was mad.

"Oh! he is mad, is he?" readily replied the King, "then I wish he would *bite* some other of my generals."

IN the time of the Rebellion of 1745, the Duke of Hamilton was extolling Scotland to the King at considerable length. When his Majesty could bear it no longer, he exclaimed:

"My lord, I only wish it was a hundred thousand miles off, and that you was king of it."

GEORGE THE THIRD having bought a horse, the dealer from whom he purchased it gave him a large sheet of paper.



"What is this?" inquired the King.

"The pedigree of the horse, your Majesty, which you have just bought," was the answer.

"Take it back," said the King good-humouredly, "take it back; it will do very well for the *next horse you sell.*"

IT is reported that when his Majesty was riding one day on Richmond Hill, he inquired of a gentleman in attendance, who lived in a certain beautiful residence that they passed? He was told that it belonged to a retired card-maker.

"Upon my life," said the King, "one would imagine all this man's cards turn up trumps."

EDWARD GIBBON, the historian, and a French physician were rivals for the favour of Lady Elizabeth Foster. The doctor, who was impatient at Gibbon's occupying so much of the lady's attention by his conversation, said—

"When my Lady Elizabeth Foster is made ill by your twaddle, I will cure her."

"When my Lady Elizabeth Foster is dead from your prescriptions," retorted Gibbon grandly, "I will immortalise her."

WHEN Oliver Goldsmith was quite a lad, a visitor exclaimed—

"Why, Noll! you are become a fright! When do you mean to get handsome again?"

"I mean to get better, sir, when you do," was the indignant retort of the wounded youth.

WILLIAM GODWIN was dining with Curran after hearing him deliver an unusually poor speech in court. The barrister thought he had acquitted himself well, and teased the author for his opinion.

"Since you *will* have my opinion," said Godwin at length, folding his arms and leaning back in his chair with *sang froid*, "I really never did hear anything so bad as your *prose*—except your *poetry*, my dear Curran!"

THE following story of Goldsmith's youthful wit has often, and in various ways, been repeated. Here it is as set forth in Forster's *Life:* There was company one day to a little dance, and the fiddler who happened to be engaged on the occasion, being a fiddler who reckoned himself a wit, received suddenly an Oliver for his Rowland which he had not come prepared for. During a pause between two country dances, the party had been greatly surprised by little Noll quickly jumping up and dancing a *pas seul* impromptu about the room, whereupon, seizing the opportunity of the lad's ungainly look and grotesque figure, the jocose fiddler promptly exclaimed "Æsop!" A burst of laughter rewarded him, which, however, was rapidly turned the other way by Noll stopping his hornpipe, looking round at his assailant,

and giving forth in audible voice and without hesitation the couplet which was thought worth preserving as the first formal effort of his genius by Percy, Malone, Campbell, and the rest who compiled the biographical preface to the *Miscellaneous Works* on which the subsequent biographies have been founded, but who nevertheless appear to have missed the correct version of what they thought so clever—



> "Heralds, proclaim aloud! all saying,
> See *Æsop* dancing, and his *Monkey* playing."

—∿∿∿—

"WHO is this Scots cur at Johnson's heels?" asked someone, amazed at the great man's sudden intimacy with Boswell.

"He is not a cur," said Goldsmith; "you are too severe. He is only a bur. Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty for sticking."

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GRATTAN having spoken about some matter to a friend, was met with—

"What you have just mentioned is a profound secret: where *could* you have heard it?"

"Where secrets are kept—in the street."

A LADY asked Grattan what was the subject of a letter which he was reading, when he replied that it was a secret.

"Well, but tell it *me*."

"No, I would trust my life in your hands, but not a secret."

IN a duel between Scott, Lord Clonmell, and Grattan it was agreed to use pistols, and on their failing, to resort to swords. Before proceeding to fire, Scott said to his legal opponent:

"I trust I shall not hear of this in any other way," (meaning by action).

"Never fear," replied Grattan, "*omnis actis personalis* moritur *cum personâ*."

DR JOHNSON took Gwyn, an architect, to task for pulling down a church which might have stood for many years and building a new one in a more convenient place, for no other reason but that there might be a direct road to a new bridge.

"You are taking," said Johnson, "a church out of the way, that the people may go in a straight line to the bridge."

"No, sir," said the architect, "I am putting the church *in* the way, that the people may not *go out of the way*."

HANDEL was at one time proprietor of the Opera House in London and at the same time played the harpsichord in the orchestra. A pompous singer, enraged at the marked attention given to the player often to the neglect of the vocalists, swore that one night he would jump down upon the instrument and stop the interruption, as he was pleased to consider it.



"Oh, oh!" said the composer, "you vill jump, vill you? very vell, sare; be so kind and tell me de night ven you vill jump, and I vill advaretise in de bills; and I shall get de great deal more money by your jumping, than I shall get by your singing."

GRATTAN said of a man who, having been a great Liberal, became a Tory on "taking silk," that all men knew silk to be a

non-conductor and since the honourable member had been enveloped *in silk*, no spark of *patriotism* had reached his heart.

"BURKE," observed Grattan, "became at last such an enthusiastic admirer of kingly power, that he could not have slept comfortably on his pillow, if he had not thought that the king had a right to carry it off from under his head."

SIR BUSICK HARWOOD, Professor of Anatomy at Cambridge University, was called in in a difficult case, and having been told the name of the previous doctor who had attended the patient, he exclaimed: "He! if he were to descend into the patient's stomach with a candle and lantern, when he ascended he would not be able to name the complaint!"

A PARTICULARLY eccentric nobleman coming out of the House of Peers, and not seeing his servant among the crowd at the door, exclaimed in a loud tone, "Where can my *fellow be*."

"*Not in Europe*, my lord," said Anthony Henley, who happened to be near.

SIR ISAAC HEAD was in company with George the Third when it was announced that his Majesty's horse was ready for him.

"Are you a judge of horses, Sir Isaac?" enquired the King.

"In my younger days, please your Majesty, I was a great deal among them," was the reply.

"What do you think of this, then?" said the King, preparing to mount his favourite; "we call him *Perfection*."

"A most appropriate name," rejoined the courtier, "for he *bears* the best of characters."

HENLEY was once haranguing on a man who had recently been hanged at Tyburn, when two or three would-be wags took it into their heads to groan loudly at all he said. At length the orator stopped short in his discourse and said—

"Gentlemen, *you* have a right to groan, for, I make no doubt, the deceased was one of your *near* relations."

DR HENNIKER was conversing with the Earl of Chatham when the statesman asked him for a definition of wit.

"My lord," replied the doctor, "wit is

like what a pension would be, given by your lordship to your humble servant—*a good thing well applied.*"

A LEARNED commentator, having been caught in a shower, entered the vestry dripping. As the time drew near for the service to begin he kept saying: "Oh, I wish that I was dry! Do you think I'm dry? Do you think I'm dry eneuch noo?"



"Bide a wee," said his colleague, Dr Henry the historian, "bide a wee, and ye'se be *dry eneuch* when you get into the *pu'pit.*"

WHEN Patrick Henry introduced his momentous resolution on the Stamp Act into the Virginian House of Burgesses, in May 1765, he exclaimed—

"Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third——"

"Treason!" exclaimed the Speaker, and "treason, treason!" echoed from every part of the building.

The orator never faltered for a moment but instantly with flashing eye continued: "*may profit by their example.* If this be treason, make the most of it."

DR BROWN, chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, dining one day with his lordship, in company with the young lady to whom he paid his addresses, was asked for his toast.

Perceiving that he hesitated, the Bishop cried out: "Oh, I beg your pardon, doctor, your *toast* is not yet *Brown*."

THOMAS HOLCROFT, the actor-author who had begun life as a bootmaker's apprentice, was once "baiting" the irascible wife of an actor who had once been a barber. She called him an impertinent puppy and added, "and if George Downing were a man, he would soon teach you good manners."

"He is well qualified, my dear Mrs Downing," retorted the impudent young actor, "for he practised upon many a *block-head* before he came to mine."

WHEN Sherlock and Hoadly (each of whom subsequently became Bishop) were freshmen at Cambridge the classical subject in which they were first lectured was Cicero's *Offices*, and one morning Hoadly was complimented for the excellence of his construing. Sherlock, who was a little vexed at his rival's success, said, as they left the lecture-room—

"Ben, you made good use of L'Estrange's *translation* to-day."

"Why, no, Tom," retorted the other, "I did not, for I had not got one; and I forgot to borrow *yours*, which I am told is the only one in the College."



COUNSELLOR HOWARD, a celebrated lawyer at the Irish bar, being counsel against a young officer who was indicted for assault, began: "My lord, I am counsel in this cause for the crown, and I am first to acquaint your lordship that this *soldier* here ——"

"Stop, sir," said the defendant (who thought the word *soldier* had been used as a word of reproach) "I would have you know, sir, I am *an officer*."

"Oh, sir, I beg your pardon," said the counsellor drily. "Why then, my lord, to speak more correctly, this officer here who is *no soldier*."

LORD HOWE, when a captain, was hastily roused in the middle of the night by a lieutenant who informed him with much perturbation that the ship was on fire close to the powder magazine.

"If that be so," said he, rising leisurely to put on his clothes, "we shall soon know it."

The lieutenant went back to the scene of danger, and at once returned, exclaiming: "You need not be afraid, sir; the fire is extinguished."

"Afraid!" thundered Howe, "what do you mean by that, sir? I never was afraid in my life"; and looking the officer full in the face, he added, "Pray, how does a man feel, sir, when he is afraid? *I need not ask how he looks.*"

A LADY foolishly said to David Hume: "I am often asked what age I am: what answer should I make?"

"Madam," replied the historian, refusing to give the compliment fished for, "when you are asked that question again, answer that you are not yet come to years of *discretion*."

HUME'S liberal opinions made him cordially disliked by the Scots clergy. Observing that whenever he entered a room a certain one

of these zealots always left it, the historian confronted him one day and addressed him thus:

"Friend, I am surprised to find you display such a pointed aversion to me; I would wish to be upon good terms with you here,—as *upon your own system*, it seems very probable that we shall be doomed to the same place hereafter. You *hope* I shall be damned for want of faith, and I *fear* you will have the same fate for want of charity."



JUDGE JEFFERIES having been told that William of Orange would shortly land, and that the prince's manifesto was already written, someone present enquired: "Pray, my Lord Chief Justice, what do you think will be the heads of this manifesto?"

"*Mine* will be one," grimly replied he.

WHEN Stella was extremely ill her doctor said, "Madam, you are near the bottom of the hill, but we will endeavour to get up again."

"Doctor," she replied, "I fear I shall be *out of breath* before I get to the top."

GEORGE THE THIRD said to a noted *bon vivant*, Sir John Irwin:

"They tell me, Sir John, that you love a glass of wine."

"Those, sire," replied he, with a bow, "who have so reported me to your Majesty, do me great injustice; they should have said — a *bottle!*"

MISTRESS HESTER JOHNSON, Swift's "Stella," excelled beyond belief, as the Dean put it, in witty sayings. On one occasion a gentleman who had been very silly and pert in her company at last began to grieve, remembering a child lately dead. A bishop sitting by tried to comfort him, saying that he should be easy, "the child was gone to heaven."

"No, my lord," said Stella, "that is it which most grieves him, because he is sure never to see his child there."

BOSWELL complained once of the noise of the company of the day before, saying that it had made his head ache.

"No, sir," said Johnson, "it was not the noise that made your head ache; it was the sense we put into it."

"Has sense that effect on the head?"

"Yes, sir, on heads not used to it."

HAVING brilliantly executed a sonata on the pianoforte in the presence of Dr Johnson, a young lady turned to the man of letters and asked if he were not fond of music?

"No, madam," said Johnson, "but of all *noises*, I think music is the least disagreeable."

DINING one day with Dr Johnson, Boswell ventured to ask him if he did not consider that a good cook was more essential to the community than a good poet.

"I don't suppose," came the reply, "that there is a *dog* in the town but what thinks so."

ASKED his opinion of the pompous title of an insignificant volume, Johnson replied "That it was similar to placing an eight-and-forty pounder at the *door of a pig-sty*."

JOHNSON and a musical friend were listening to a celebrated violinist. The friend, noticing Johnson's inattention, tried to induce him to take more notice of what was going on by explaining how extremely difficult was the solo being performed.

"Difficult, do you call it, sir?" muttered the doctor, "I wish it were *impossible*."

A PRETENTIOUS person endeavoured to ingratiate himself in Dr Johnson's favour by laughing immoderately at everything he said. The doctor bore it for some time, but at length the impertinent guffaw became intolerable, and he stopped it with—

"Pray, sir, what is the matter? I hope I have not said anything which *you* can comprehend."

AFTER an interview with Mrs Siddons, Dr Johnson said to his companion, Dr Glover,

"Sir, she is a prodigiously fine woman."

"Yes," answered the other, "but don't you



think she is much finer upon the stage, when she is adorned by art?"

"Sir," said Johnson, "on the stage *art* does not adorn her; *nature adorns* her there, and *art glorifies* her."

HENDERSON, a notable actor of his day, on being introduced to Johnson, asked the doctor what were his views of a tragedy *Dido*, and its author, one Joseph Reed.

"Sir," replied Johnson, "I never did the man an injury, yet he *would read his tragedy to me!*"

MRS SIDDONS having visited Johnson in Bolt Court, there was some delay in providing her with a chair, when the gruff old doctor paid her a neat compliment by saying, "You see, Madam, wherever *you* go, there are *no seats* to be had."

A PERT youth having lamented within Dr Johnson's hearing that he had *lost* all his Greek, "Aye, sir," said the old man, snubbing pretentiousness, "I believe it happened at the same time that I lost all my large estate in Yorkshire."

WISHING to ingratiate himself with the surly Doctor an acquaintance said, "Sir, when we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother very entertaining."

"Sir," grunted Johnson, "*I can wait.*"

DR JOHNSON was present at a gathering when a recently published essay on the future life of brutes came up for discussion. A gentleman, disposed to support the author's contention, addressing Johnson with easy familiarity, said—



"Really, sir, when we see a very sensible dog we don't know what to think of him."

"True, sir," retorted the doctor; "and when we see a very foolish *fellow*, we don't know what to think of *him*."

WHEN Johnson courted his future wife he informed her that he was of but mean extraction, that he was poor, and that he had had a relation hanged. To prove her equality the lady promptly answered that she had no more money than himself; and that, though she had not had a relative hanged, she had fifty who deserved hanging.

DR JOHNSON having been asked his opinion of a certain moneyed nonentity, described him as "a mere sheep, sir, with a golden fleece."

AT a coffee house gathering, someone sitting next to Johnson rose and left the apartment, and another member of the company enquired who he was.

"I cannot exactly tell you, sir," said Johnson, "and I should be loth to speak ill of any person whom I do not know deserves it, but I am afraid he is an *attorney*."

BOSWELL, on his first introduction to Johnson, apologised as follows for his being a Scotsman:—

"I find that I am come to London at a bad time, when great popular prejudice has gone forth against us North Britons; but when I am talking to you, I am talking to a large and liberal mind, and you know that I cannot *help coming from Scotland*."

"Sir," said Johnson, "*neither* can the rest of your countrymen."

AT the Theatre one night Johnson and his party, who occupied a box, were much troubled by the impertinence of a young man of fashion, who insisted upon having a place with them.

"Pshaw, sir, how can you be so mistaken," thundered the doctor, "your *place* is in the shilling gallery.

WHEN Johnson was completing his tragedy of *Irene* he read a part of it to Walmesley, registrar of the Spiritual Court; that friend objected that the author had brought his heroine into too great distress, and asked him: "How can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?"

"Sir," said Johnson slyly, "I can put her into the Spiritual Court!"

BOTH Johnson and Foote always readily availed themselves of opportunities of making fun of Scotsmen. In a discussion as to whether the Scots immigration to the metropolis was on the increase the player insisted that it was not.

The dispute continued with friendly warmth for some time, when Johnson called out: "You are, certainly, in the wrong, Sam; but I see how you are deceived; you cannot distinguish them now as formerly—for the fellows all come *breeched* to the capital of late years."

A DYSPEPTIC friend, having plagued Johnson with an account of his health, was justly snubbed with: "Do not be like the spider, man, and spin conversation thus incessantly out of thine own bowels."

GARRICK, addressing Johnson behind the scenes one evening, said: "My dear sir, don't disturb my feelings, consider the exertions I have to go through."



"As for your feelings, David," replied Johnson, "Punch has just as many; and as for your exertions, those of a man who cries turnips about the streets are greater."

OF a Scotswoman, Johnson said that she resembled a dead-nettle — "were she alive she would sting."

VANITY was one of Goldsmith's greatest weaknesses, and on the success of Beattie's *Essay on Truth* he said petulantly to Johnson:

"Here's such a stir about a fellow that has written one book, and I have written many."

"Ah! Doctor," said Johnson slyly, "there go two and forty sixpences, you know, to make one guinea.

"YOU know Mr Capel, Dr Johnson?"

"Yes, sir, I have seen him at Garrick's."

"And what think you of his abilities?"

"They are just sufficient, sir, to enable him to select the white hairs from the black ones for the use of the peruke-makers. Were he and I to count the grains in a bushel of wheat for a wager, he would certainly prove the winner."

JONAS HANWAY, having written an account of his travels in Persia, followed it up with a book about Portsmouth; and, according to Johnson, he acquired some reputation by travelling abroad but lost it all by travelling at home.

A SCOTSMAN in company with Johnson and Boswell at the Mitre was defending his native land, insisting that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects.

"I believe, sir," said Johnson, in reply, "you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotsman ever sees is the high road which leads him to England."

A FINE reproof for those who grumble at circumstances which compel them to do this, that, or the other, is contained in Dr Johnson's remark to a friend:

"Sir, the man who has vigour may walk to the East, just as well as to the West, if he happen to turn his head that way."

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"DO you really believe, Dr Johnson," inquired a lady friend, "in the dead walking after death."

"Madam," said Johnson, "I have no doubt on the subject, I have heard the 'Dead March' in *Saul*."

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GARRICK, referring to Johnson's well-known dislike of all Whigs, asked him one day—"Why did not you make me a Tory, when we lived so much together? You love to make people Tories."

"Why," retorted Johnson, pulling a number of half-pennies from his pocket, "did not the King make these guineas?"

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SOMEONE was praising Corneille in opposition to Shakespeare, when Johnson broke in with: "Corneille is to Shakespeare as a clipped hedge is to a forest."

JOHNSON, when help would have been of great service to him, was treated but cavalierly by the Earl of Chesterfield, and retorted in the most outspoken fashion in a letter which has become famous. Some time after this, a noble friend remonstrated with the author over his desertion of one who had given such public encouragement to his *Dictionary*.



"Serviceable to me, my lord!" said Johnson, "in no respect whatsoever. I had been for years sailing round the World of Literature, and just as I was getting into the chops of the Channel, his Lordship sends out two *little cockboats*, more to partake of my triumph than to pilot me into harbour. No, no, my Lord Chesterfield may be a *wit amongst lords*, but I fancy he is no more than a *lord amongst wits*."

A SCOTSMAN hoped that on returning from his tour in the North Johnson would have a better opinion of Scotland, and enquired what he thought of it.

"That it is a very vile country, to be sure," answered the doctor.

"Well, sir, God made it!"

"Certainly He did; but we must always remember that He made it for Scotsmen and —comparisons are odious, but God made Hell!"

SOMEONE having mentioned some Scots who had taken possession of a barren part of America, wondered why they should have chosen it.

"Why, sir," said Johnson, "all barrenness is comparative. The *Scots* would not know it to be barren."

A DR ADAMS, discussing Lord Chesterfield with Dr Johnson, insisted that the former was always affable and easy of access.

"Sir," said Johnson, "that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing."

"No," retorted Adams, "there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two."

"But mine," replied Johnson instantly, "was *defensive* pride."

JOHNSON and Boswell were at Bristol; says the latter: We were by no means pleased with our inn.

"Let us see, now," said I, "how we should describe it."

"Describe it, sir? Why, it was so bad, that —Boswell wished to be in Scotland!"

AFTER the celebrated tour in the Hebrides, Boswell inquired of his companion—

"You have now been in Scotland, sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there."

"Why, yes, sir," replied Johnson; "meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.'

ON the publication of Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works, under the editorship of Mallet, Johnson waxed wroth: "Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward—a coward for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotsman to draw the trigger after his death!"

DESPITE his frequent witticisms at the expense of Scotland and the Scots, Johnson uniformly praised George Buchanan as a writer. Once when he had done so, a friend said—

"Ah, Dr Johnson, what would you have said of Buchanan had he been an Englishman?"

"Why, sir," said Johnson, after a brief pause, "I should *not* have said of Buchanan, had he been an *Englishman*, what I will now say of him as *Scotsman*—that he was the only man of genius his country ever produced."

A CURATE named Joseph preached at Dublin Cathedral, by permission of Dean Swift, before an oblivious nobleman, Butler, Duke of Ormond, and took as his text—"Yet did not the chief *Butler* remember *Joseph*, but forgot him."

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE KENYON once said to a rich friend, asking his opinion as to the probable success of a son: "Sir, let your son forthwith spend his fortune; marry, and spend his wife's; and then he may be expected to apply with energy to his profession."

WHEN Erskine was retained in defence of a man named Tickle, he began his case by saying—

"Tickle, my client, the defendant, my lord——"

He had got so far when he was interrupted



by the merriment of the court, which was considerably increased when Lord Kaimes, who was the judge, observed: "*Tickle* him yourself, Harry; you are as able to do so as I am."

WHEN it was remarked upon as curious that Sheridan, who could write so well for the stage, had written so little, Michael Kelly happily said, "Mr Sheridan is afraid of the author of *The School for Scandal.*"

ONE of the talented Kemble family made a first appearance on the operatic stage. His voice, however, was such that at a rehearsal the conductor exclaimed, "Mr Kemble! Mr Kemble! you are murdering the music!"



"My dear sir," was Kemble's quiet reply, "it is far better to kill it outright than to keep on *beating it as you do.*"

KNELLER, "by heaven and not a master taught," in his later years painted more for profit than fame. A friend, noticing a falling off in his work, said:

"What do you think posterity will say, Sir Godfrey, when they see these pictures some years hence?"

"Say!" exclaimed the artist, "why, they'll say Sir Godfrey Kneller *never* painted them."

STEPHEN KEMBLE, who was very fat, was with Mrs Esten crossing the Frith, when a gale sprang up which alarmed the passengers.

"Suppose, Mr Kemble," said the beautiful actress, "that we become food for fishes, which of us two do you think they will eat first?"

"Those that are *gluttons*," gracefully replied the comedian, "will undoubtedly fall foul of *me*; but the *epicures* will attack you!"

SIR GODFREY KNELLER on one occasion neatly retaliated on Pope. There had been an animated discussion in which the painter had been laying down the law, when the poet broke in with—

"If Sir Godfrey had been consulted in the creation of the world, it would have been more perfect than it is."

"There are *some little things* in it I think I could have mended," said Kneller, with a meaning glance at his diminutive adversary.

A CONCEITED scribbler asked Nat Lee if it was not easy to write like a madman, as he did.

"No," answered Lee, "but it is easy to write like a fool as you do."

SIR GODFREY KNELLER was very intimate with his next neighbour, Dr Ratcliffe, and as he had a fine garden and the doctor was fond of flowers, a door was made from one garden to the other.

The painter found after a time that the doctor's servants gathered his flowers, so he sent to Ratcliffe, and informed him that he would nail up the door.

"Tell him he may do anything but *paint* it," said the enraged medico.

"Well," replied Kneller to this message, "he may say what he will, for, tell him, I will take anything from him, *except physic*."

DR ROGER LONG, a celebrated astronomer in his day, was walking, one dark evening, with a gentleman in Cambridge when the latter came to a short post fixed in the pavement, but which, in the earnestness of conversation, taking to be a boy standing in the path, he said testily—

"Get out of the way, boy."

"That boy," said Dr Long readily, "is a *post-boy*, who never turns out of the way for anybody."

AT the time when the question of the Union was being hotly debated, many barristers wrote pamphlets on the subject. One of these, Bethel by name, met Lysaght in the hall of the Four Courts, when the latter hailed him with—



"Zounds! Bethel, I wonder you never told me you had published a pamphlet on the Union. The one I saw contained some of the best things I have yet seen in any pamphlet on the subject."

"I'm very proud you think so," said the other with a self-satisfied air, "and, pray, what are the things that pleased you so much?"

"Why," replied Lysaght, "as I passed by a pastry-cook's shop this morning, I saw a girl come out with three *hot mince-pies* wrapped up in one of your works."

GEORGE THE THIRD, when holding a grand naval review at Portsmouth, observed a boy who mounted the shrouds with the most surprising ease and rapidity. Turning to Lord Lothian, the King said—

"Lothian, I have heard much of your agility; let me see you run up after that boy."

"Sire," replied the shrewd nobleman, "it is my duty to *follow your Majesty.*"

MACKLIN was at the theatre with a friend, at the back of the front boxes, when a lounger stood up in front of them and obscured the stage. Macklin patted the interloper gently on the back and requested "that when he saw or heard anything that was entertaining on the stage, to let him and the gentleman with him know of it, as at present they must totally depend on *his kindness.*"

The lounger promptly removed himself.

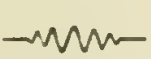
MANAGER COLMAN, having written a play with a yawning scene in it, was having a rehearsal in a doleful manner when he met Macklin, who asked what the matter was.

"The matter," growled Colman; "I can't get these fellows to *yawn.*"

"Oh, if that's all," suggested Macklin, "you have only to read the first act of *The Man of Business.*" (A dull play by Colman.)

A NOTORIOUS egotist complained to Macklin that though he was always interfering to the good of others yet he frequently met with unsuitable returns. Why was it so?

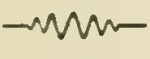
"The cause is plain enough," said Macklin, "*impudence* — nothing but stark staring impudence!"



WHEN ex-stable boy Holcroft, afterwards author of *The Road to Ruin*, was anxious to get a footing as an actor, he got an introduction to Macklin. That eccentric told him to sit down, eyed him narrowly, and then suddenly enquired "What had put it into his head to turn actor?"

Holcroft was a bit taken aback by the abruptness of the question, and replied with ill-timed levity that "he had *taken it into his head* to suppose it was genius, but that it was very possible he might be mistaken."

"Yes," said Macklin savagely, "that's possible enough; and, by God, sir, you are not the first that I have known so mistaken."



BEING asked his opinion of the members of the ministry which had just resigned, Macklin growled out: "I am no astronomer,

sir, but they seem to me to be wandering planets, though it would be much better for the people of this distracted country, if they were fixed stars at Tyburn or Temple-Bar."

SIR FLETCHER NORTON was well known for his lack of *suaviter in modo.* Once when pleading before Lord Mansfield on some question of manorial right, he had the misfortune to say:

"My lord, I can illustrate the point in an instant in my own person; I myself have two little manors——"

"We all *know it*, Sir Fletcher," the judge immediately interposed with a smile.

A JEW was suing a Christian for debt before Lord Mansfield. The defendant pleaded that the debt was really owing, but the *Jew* had no right by the laws of England, to bring an action.

"Well," said Mansfield, "have you no other plea?"

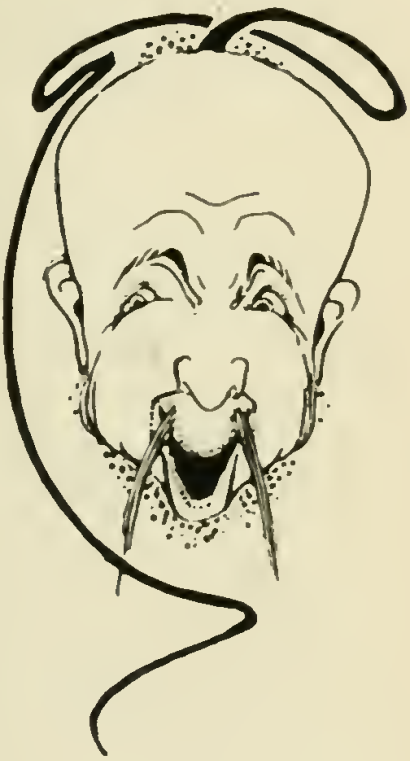
"No, my lord; I insist upon this plea."

"Do you so," said the judge, "then let me tell you that you are the *greater Jew of the two.*"

LORD MANSFIELD, wishing to save a man who had stolen a watch, directed the jury to value it at *tenpence.*

"Tenpence, my lord," cried the prosecutor indignantly, "why, the very *fashion* of it cost me *five pounds!*"

"Oh," said the judge blandly, "but we must not hang a man for *fashion's* sake."



SAMUEL FOOTE, having been seriously libelled, brought an action, in which he was able to prove by an alibi that he could not have been guilty of the crime charged against him. After the trial was concluded, Lord Mansfield, addressing the comedian, said:

"This is a very providential alibi; it has baffled the most infamous conspiracy ever set on *foot.*"

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE was fond of playing billiards, at which game, however, his friend Dr Monsey excelled him.

"How does it happen, Monsey," asked the

statesman, "that nobody beats me at billiards, or contradicts me, but you?"

"The solution is easy," replied his friend, "I want neither place nor money from you, perhaps if I did I should be as great a bungler at billiards as you are."

A COURT lady, having received a pair of diamond earrings as a bribe for procuring a post for a certain peer, paid a visit to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, wearing her spoils.

No sooner had she gone than the Duchess blurted out, "What an impudent creature to come hither with the bribe in her ear!"

"Madam," remarked Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "how should people know where wine is sold, unless a bush is hung out?"

POPE, having written some bitter verses upon Lady Mary, told a friend that he had set her down in black and white and would soon publish what he had written.

This remark soon reached Lady Mary herself, and she promptly replied: "Be so good as to tell the little gentleman that I am not at all afraid of him; for if he sets me down in black and white, as he calls it, most assuredly I will set him down in *black and blue.*"

SIR HENRY MARSHALL was rising off his knee, after being knighted by George II., when he stumbled, but immediately apologised to the King, saying :

"Your Majesty has loaded me with such honour that I cannot well *stand* under it."

WALPOLE once proposed that as politics spoil conversation, every one in a certain gathering should forfeit half-a-crown who said anything tending to introduce the idea either of Ministers or Opposition.

Hannah More suggested that whoever mentioned *pit*-coal or a *fox*-skin muff should be considered guilty.

A SUBSCRIPTION was set afoot in Bath to strike a medal in celebration of a recent notable cure effected by the waters. An artist was engaged and a medal prepared. It was, however, not approved by the Committee, and one of the members in high dudgeon took it to Nash, as Master of the Ceremonies, and calling it a mere "pick-pocket piece of work," asked what he thought of it.

"Don't be angry, sir," said the Beau soothingly, "the man may in all probability be a very honest man—it is absolutely clear that he is *no designer*."

BEAU NASH was once proposing a charity subscription at Bath when a notoriously mean man of means was present. After he had delivered a sentence appealing for funds, Nash turned and shouted it in the ears of the niggardly one, who immediately protested, asking what he did that for.

"Because," retorted the Beau, "on these occasions you are generally deaf."

THE witty Beau was one evening engaged in collecting subscriptions for the Bath Hospital. A Duchess who was more notable for her wit than her charity, entered the room, and not being able to pass him unobserved, she gave him a tap with her fan, and said:

"You must put down a trifle for me, Nash, for I have no money in my pocket."

"Yes, Madam," said he, "that I will, with pleasure, if your Grace will tell me when to stop."



Taking a handful of guineas out of his pocket, he began counting them into his white hat, "one, two, three, four, five,——"

"Hold! hold!" exclaimed the Duchess, "consider what you are about."

"Consider your rank and fortune, madam," answered Nash, and continued "six, seven, eight, nine, ten,——"

Here the Duchess again broke in angrily, but "Pray compose yourself, Madam," cried the Beau coolly, "and don't interrupt the work of charity; eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen,——"

The Duchess began to storm and caught hold of his hand. "Peace, Madam," said the relentless autocrat of the Pump Room, "you shall have your name written in letters of gold, Madam; sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty,——"

"I won't pay a farthing more," broke in the unwillingly charitable Duchess.

"Charity hides a multitude of sins," quietly observed her tormentor; "twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, ——"

"Nash," said she, "I protest you frighten me out of my wits. Lord! I shall die!"

"Madam, you will never die with doing good; and if you do it will be the better for you," and he proceeded counting and only after some altercation agreed to hold his hand when he had made his victim responsible for thirty guineas.



IT was a decidedly equivocal invitation which Roche sent to a friend: "I hope, my lord, if ever you come within a mile of my house, that you'll *stay there all night.*"

MEETING an acquaintance very much in liquor early one morning, Beau Nash inquired where he had been. The friend said he had been all night at a concert of music.

"Very likely," said Nash, "for I perceive you have *drunk to some tune*."

INTRODUCING a lady to the select of Bath, Beau Nash said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Mrs Hobson. I have often heard of Hobson's choice, but never had the pleasure to view it till now, and you must coincide with me, that it reflects credit on his taste."

BEAU NASH, says Samuel Rogers, was once dancing a minuet at Bath with a Miss Lunn. She was so long before giving him *both her hands* (the figure by which the lady, when she thinks proper, brings the dance to a close) that he lost all patience, and, suiting the words to the tune, he sung out as she passed him,—



"Miss Lunn, Miss Lunn,
Will you never have done?"

A GENTLEMAN at Bath who had been very extravagant and squandered away most of his fortune, being absent from the Pump Room, his friends enquired of Beau Nash about him. The Beau replied briefly that he *kept his bed.* Upon this, several went to visit the absentee, and finding him in the best of health, told him of the report which Nash had spread. The gentleman, very wrath, went to the Beau and asked what he meant by treating him so.

"Why in such a heat?" said Nash, "I sincerely hope that I have said nothing but the truth. I ventured to tell these gentlemen, indeed, that you *kept your bed*, and if you have I rejoice at it: it is the only thing you have kept, and I knew it would be the last you would part with."

GOING to visit Beau Nash, a gentleman found him just leaving the house, gorgeously attired, and asked where he was going.

"Going!" echoed Nash, "why, I'm going to *advertise.*"

"What?"

"Why, myself; for that's the only use of a fine coat."

LORD NORTH, who was very corpulent before a severe illness, said to his physician after it—

"Sir, I am obliged to you for introducing me to some old acquaintances."

"Who are they, my lord?" inquired the doctor.

"*My ribs*," replied his lordship, "which I have not felt for many years until now."

IT is said that Lord North often slept during the speeches of his Parliamentary opponents, leaving a colleague to make note of anything remarkable. A tedious speaker during a naval debate began describing the growth of shipbuilding from the time of Noah's ark onwards. When he had reached the time of the Spanish Armada, North was awakened inadvertently by his colleague, and inquired at what period the speaker had got to.



"We are now in the reign of Queen Elizabeth," was the answer.

"Dear, dear," said the Premier, "why not let me sleep a *century or two* more?"

LORD NORTH often simulated sleep during the attacks of the Opposition; and on one occasion the man who was speaking said indignantly, "Even now, in these perils, the noble lord is asleep!"

"I wish I *was*," promptly remarked the minister.

THE famous minister, who had a strong antipathy to music, was asked once why he did not subscribe to a certain series of concerts, it being urged as a special reason why he should that his brother, the Bishop of Winchester, did so.

"Yes," said Lord North, "if I were as *deaf* as my brother, I would *subscribe too*."

AN indignant speaker, impeaching Lord North of all manner of crimes, and vehemently calling aloud for his head, became still more exasperated when he saw the unpopular minister apparently slumbering.

North was, however, only "foxing," and at once retorted that it was cruel that he should be denied the solace which other criminals so often enjoyed—that of a *night's rest* before their fate.

FOX having said that he would like to devise a tax which should not fall upon himself, Lord North promptly suggested, "Tax *receipts*, for you never see them."

A MEMBER having suggested that a starling should be placed near the Speaker's chair and taught to repeat the cry of "Infamous coalition!" Lord North was equal to the occa-



sion, and said that he thought to carry out the honourable member's proposal would be a needless waste of public money, since the starling might so well perform his office by *deputy*.

YET another instance is recorded of a prosy speaker reproving the Premier for going to sleep and not listening to what was being said.

"Pooh! pooh!" said Lord North, "the physician should never quarrel with *the effect* of his own medicine."

A WELL-KNOWN office-seeker at the Court of George III. was one Hutchinson. When he first appeared, the King asked Lord North who he was.

"He is, your Majesty," replied the minister, "Secretary of State for Ireland—a man on whom if your Majesty was pleased to bestow the United Kingdom, he would ask for the Isle of Man as a potato garden."

WHEN Lord Eldon, then plain John Scott, was an undergraduate at Oxford, he fell through the ice when skating. He scrambled to a place of safety, when a brandy vendor shuffled towards him and recommended a glass of something warm; upon this a fellow-student, Edward Norton, called out to the retailer—

"None of your brandy for that wet young man; he never drinks but when he is *dry*."



LORD NORTH was always ready with witty and humorous remarks in the House of Commons, yet his sallies were such as rarely to give offence. Parrying an attack once, he said—

"One member who spoke of me called me 'that thing of a minister'; to be sure I am a thing; the member, therefore, when he called me a thing, said what was true, and I could not be angry with him; but when he added, that thing called a minister, he called me that thing which of all things he himself wished to be, and therefore I took it as a compliment."

ONCE a would-be artist said to the great painter, Opie, "Pray, Mr Opie, may I ask what you mix your colours with?"

"With brains, sir," was the appropriate reply.

A SUSPICIOUS character being taken before the Earl of Nottingham during the reign of William the Third, was examined for fear he should be in possession of treasonable correspondence.

"I am only a poet," said the prisoner, "and these papers are a play which I have written."

The Earl looked through the bundle and handed them back, saying, "I have heard your statement and read your play, and as I can find *no trace of a plot* in either, you may go free."

ONE day after dinner Curran, the famous Irish orator, remarked to his neighbour, Father O'Leary, "Reverend father, I wish you were St Peter."

"And why would you wish that I were St Peter?" asked the priest.

"Because, in that case," said the barrister, "you would have the keys of heaven, and you could let me in."

"By my honour and conscience, it would be better for you that I had the keys of the other place, for then I could let you out."

DURING the latter half of the eighteenth century the controversy in the matter of requiring a subscription to articles of faith, as practised by the Church of England, excited considerable feeling among the members of the universities. Paley, having been asked to sign a clerical petition for presentation to the House of Commons, excused himself, saying, "I cannot *afford* to keep a conscience."

SMARTING under the wit of Voltaire, a French nobleman waylaid him and cudgelled him. The next day the indignant philosopher applied to the Duke of Orleans, begging him to *do justice* in the case.

"Sir," replied the Regent, smiling, "it has been *done already*."

PALEY was, naturally enough, in very high spirits on receiving his first preferment. Attending a visitation dinner just after the event, he called out humorously during the entertainment, "Waiter, shut down that window at the back of my chair, and open another behind some *curate*."



WHEN at Cambridge, being one day with a party of young men who were discussing somewhat pompously the *summum bonum* of human life, Paley listened to their arguments with patience, and then replied—

"I differ from you all. The true *summum bonum* of human life consists in reading *Tristram Shandy*, in blowing with a pair of bellows into your shoes in hot weather, and in roasting potatoes in the ashes under the grate in cold."

WHEN Pitt visited Cambridge University as Prime Minister, Paley preached a sermon before him from the pertinent text, "There is a lad here who has two loaves and five small fishes—but what are they among so many?"

THERE being a great disturbance at Drury Lane theatre one night, Palmer, one of the actors, went on the stage to say something to soothe the audience, but was met by an orange thrown full at him. He picked it up, looked it all over, and then, bowing to the audience, said, "This is no *civil* orange, I think."

AN impertinent young man worried Dr Parr with an account of his complaints, saying that he could not go out without catching cold in his head.

"No wonder," said Parr, "you always go out without *anything in it.*'

IN conversation with Dr Parr, a sceptical man observed that he would not believe anything which he could not understand.

"Then, young man," said the scholar, "*your creed* will be the shortest of any man's I know."

DR PARR was fond of a game of whist, but could not tolerate any want of skill in those with whom he was playing. Being engaged with a party in which he was unequally matched, he was asked by a bystander how the game went.

"Pretty well," answered he, "considering that I have *three* adversaries."

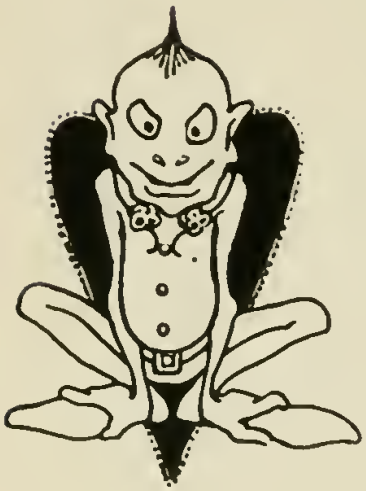
SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH having taken Dr Parr for a drive once, the horse became restive, and the scholar became nervous. "Gently, Jemmy," said the doctor, "don't irritate him; always soothe your horse, Jemmy. You'll do better without me. Let me down, Jemmy."

Once on *terra firma*, the doctor's views underwent a remarkable change. "Now, Jemmy, touch him up. Never let a horse get the better of you. Touch him up, conquer him, don't spare him; and now I'll leave you to manage him—*I'll walk back.*"

DR PARR having called a clergyman a *fool*, the latter declared that he would complain to the Bishop.

"Do so, by all means," said Parr, "and my Lord Bishop will *confirm* you."

ONE Cumberland, dining with Dr Parr at a Mr Dilly's, spoke disparagingly of Priestley. The next day the doctor met a friend, and exclaimed wrathfully: "Only think of Mr Cumberland! that he should have presumed to talk *before me—before me, sir* —in such terms of *my* friend, Dr Priestley! Pray, sir, let Mr Dilly know my opinion of Mr Cumberland —that his ignorance is equalled only by his impertinence, and that both are exceeded by his malice."



TO an antagonist of whom he had but a poor opinion, Parr exclaimed: "You have read a great deal, you have thought very little, and you know nothing."

IN a company consisting mainly of clerics, the conversation turned not unnaturally on the then head of the Church. Dr Parr, after listening for some time to the strictures of his companions, broke in with—

"Sir, he is a poor paltry prelate, proud of petty popularity, and perpetually preaching to petticoats."

WHEN James O'Quigley had been executed for high treason, Sir James Mackintosh spoke strongly of the offender, but was somewhat nonplussed by a vigorous onslaught from Dr Parr, who exclaimed, "He was an Irishman—and he might have been a Scotchman; he was a priest—and he might have been a lawyer; he was a rebel—and he might have been an apostate."

PARSONS, an actor-manager-scene-painter, was engaged in copying a painting in the theatre when a young solicitor of his acquaintance called upon him, and promisingly said—

"Upon my soul, but I like it amazingly as far as you've gone."

"Do you think so, my boy," responded Parsons; "well, you're a young lawyer, and therefore *may* be a judge."

ONE evening a number of persons were engaged in some literary disquisition, and a child—a daughter of Sheridan, nicknamed "Libs"—was but impatiently enduring their neglect, when a Mrs Peckhard suddenly terminated the conversation by gaily exclaiming—

"Come, don't let us be so austere or Libs won't note us."

Thus, in one short and familiar sentence, including the Latin names of the three winds—Auster, Libs, and Notos.

MRS PIOZZI, having called upon a lady of quality, was told by the servant that "she was indifferent."

"Is she, indeed," retorted the visitor, in a huff, "then, pray, tell her that I can be as indifferent as she," and walked off.

PITT convened a meeting of country gentlemen, chiefly militia officers, to consider his Additional Force Bill.

One member objected to a clause for calling out the Force, which, he insisted, should not be done "except in case of actual invasion."

"That would be too late," replied Pitt, but the objector remained firm.

Presently they came to another clause, to render the Force more disposable; the same gentleman objected again, and insisted very warmly that he would never consent to its being sent out of England.

"Except, I suppose," retorted Pitt, "*in case of actual invasion.*"



LORD PETERBOROUGH was once about to be roughly treated by a mob, who mistook him for the great Duke of Marlborough, who happened at the moment to be unpopular. "Gentlemen," he readily interposed, "I can convince you by two reasons that I am not the Duke of Marlborough. In the first place, I have only *five guineas* in my pocket; and in the second, they are heartily at your service." He was allowed to continue his way by acclamation.

LORD CHANCELLOR THURLOW was supposed to be on no friendly terms with Pitt, and a friend inquiring how the Chancellor "drew with them?"—

"I don't know," answered the Premier, "how he *draws*, but he has not refused *his oats* yet."

POPE having asked Swift what people thought him in Ireland, was answered—

"Why, they think you a very *little man*, but a very *great poet*."

"They think the very reverse of you in England," acrimoniously retorted Pope, who, despite his diminutive size, was not devoid of personal vanity.

EVEN doctors will at times disagree, and during Pope's last illness there was quite an unseemly squabble between his two medical attendants, Dr Burton and Dr Thomson, each charging the other with hastening the patient's end by improper prescriptions.

"Gentlemen," Pope himself broke in with,



"I only learn by your discourse that I am in a dangerous way; therefore, all I now ask is, that the following epigram may be added after my death to the next edition of the *Dunciad*, by way of postscript :—

"Dunces rejoice, forgive all censures fast,
The *greatest dunce* has killed your foe at last."

PITT, speaking in the House of Commons of the war which preceded the then recent American War of Independence, called it "the last war."

Several members immediately called out, "The last war but one," but he took no notice, and shortly after repeated the error, when he was interrupted by a general cry of "The last war but one! The last war but one!"

"I mean, sir," said Pitt, turning to the Speaker and raising his voice, "I mean, sir, the last war that Britons would wish *to remember.*"



ALEXANDER POPE, dining once with Frederick, Prince of Wales, paid him many compliments.

"I wonder, Pope," said the Prince, "that you, who are so severe on kings, should be so complaisant to me."

"It is because I like the lion best," replied the poet, cleverly, "before his claws are grown."



WHEN he first saw Garrick act, Pope, with considerable foresight, remarked: "I am afraid that young man will be spoiled, for he will have no competitors."

WHEN anyone told Porson that he intended to *publish* a book, Porson would say, "Remember that two parties must agree on that point,—you and the reader."

DR JOWETT having been permitted by the head of his college to cultivate a small strip of ground, the wags of the university made much fun of his garden, and, fearful of ridicule, he altered it into a plot of gravel, on



hearing which Porson extemporised as follows:—

"A *little* garden *little* Jowett made,
And fenced it with a *little* palisade;
Because this garden made a *little* talk
He changed it to a *little* gravel walk;
Now, if you'd know the mind of *little* Jowett
This *little* garden doth a *little* show it."

SHORTLY after Porson returned from a visit to Germany, he was asked at a party to give a sketch of his journey, which he immediately did in the following extempore lines :—

"I went to Frankfort and got drunk
With that most learn'd Professor, Brunck ;
I went to Warts and got more drunken
With that more learn'd Professor, Ruhnken."

PORSON was disputing with an acquaintance, who, finding himself getting the worst of it, lost his temper, observing—

"Professor, *my opinion* of you is most contemptible."

"Sir," retaliated the scholar, "I never knew an *opinion* of yours that was *not contemptible.*"

IN one of his writings Dr Parr referred to Porson as "a giant in literature."

The Professor, who did not like praise, asked, "How should Dr Parr be able to take the measure of a giant?"

WHEN Porson was informed that the Bishop of Lincoln had been left a large estate by a person who had only seen him once, "Ah!" said he, "it would not have happened if the person had seen him twice."

BISHOP PORTEUS having changed his opinions, Porson insisted on always speaking of him as Bishop *Proteus*.

A GENTLEMAN who had heard that Bentley was born in the North, asked—



"Wasn't he a Scotchman?"

"No, sir," replied Porson; "Bentley was a *great Greek scholar*."

AN author — Boaden — having read his new play of *Aurelia and Miranda* in the green-room of Drury Lane theatre, observed that he knew nothing so terrible as reading a piece before such a critical audience of actors and actresses.

"I know one thing more terrible," quietly remarked Mrs Powell, one of the actresses.

"What can that be?" asked the playwright.

"To be obliged to sit and hear it."

SOMEONE speaking of Southey's *Madoc* before Porson, the scholar meaningly observed: "*Madoc* will be read—*when Homer and Virgil are forgotten.*"

A FRENCHMAN, who was showing Matthew Prior over the Palace of Versailles, desired the poet to observe the many trophies of Louis the Fourteenth's victories, and asked if King William had such trophies in his palace.

"No," said Prior, "the monuments of my master's victories are to be seen everywhere *except in his own house.*"

ONE Daniel Purcel, the "famous punster," as he is called in the jest-books of a century ago, having called for some pipes in a tavern, complained that they were too short. The attendant said they had no other, and those were but just come in. "Ay," said the joker, "I see your master has not bought them long."

PURCEL meeting a friend on the 30th of January, they went to a tavern, where, finding the door shut, they knocked. One of the drawers asked through a little wicket what they would be pleased to have.

"Have!" exclaimed Purcel, "open your door and draw us a pint of wine."

The drawer replied that he could not do so, for it was a fast.

"Damn your master for a precise coxcomb," retorted the other. "Is he not contented to fast himself, but he must make his door fast too."

QUICK was once disputing with another actor, who contended that he knew every line of Shakespeare's.



"Indeed you do not," contradicted Quick.

"How do you prove it?" asked the other.

"It will be proved one day," replied Quick, "for there is a gentleman, namesake to the bard, in Rope Maker's Walk, will furnish you with a *line* you never met before, depend on't, my boy."

SOMEONE approaching Quick and a friend, the player asked who it was, and was told that it was Lord B.

"Ah!" said he, "I thought it was a lord, he looks so *little like a gentleman*."

DANIEL PURCEL was a non-juror, and when describing to a friend the landing of King George the First at Greenwich, he said that he had a full view of him.

"Then," said his friend, "you know him by sight."

"Yes," answered Purcel, "I think I know him, *but I can't swear to him.*"

HERALDRY was being discussed in a company where Quick was, when a rich man whose father had been a *footman* said pretentiously that "he had seen his arms on a baronet's carriage, and they must be related."

"Probably," said the wit; "your family, sir, is pretty extensive—your father's *arms* must have been upon many carriages."

A YOUNG would-be actor had to display his talents before Quin. The witty actor heard one or two speeches vilely delivered, and then asked if the candidate had done anything in comedy.

"Yes," readily answered he; "Abel in the *Alchymist.*"

"You mistake, boy," replied the comedian. "It was the part of Cain you acted, for I am sure you murdered Abel."

QUIN having told Lady Berkeley that she looked as blooming as the spring, suddenly recollected the backwardness of the season, and added: "I would to God this spring would look like your ladyship!"

WHEN he first visited Bath, Quin found himself so extravagantly charged for everything that he complained to Beau Nash, who had invited him to that city, as being the cheapest place in England for a man of taste and a *bon-vivant*.

"They have acted," answered the Beau, "upon truly Christian principles."

"How so?" enquired Quin.

"Why, you were a stranger, and they *took you in*."

"Ay," said the wit; "but they have *fleeced* instead of *clothing* me."

ON being asked what the members of the ministry were engaged in, Quin repeated the following story as applicable: The master of a vessel calls down the hatchway, "Who is there?"—A boy answered, "Will, sir!"—"What are you doing!"—"Nothing, sir."—"Is Tom there?"—"Yes," says Tom.—"What are you doing, Tom?"—"Helping Will, sir."

QUIN said that on the 30th of January (the anniversary of the execution of Charles the First) every king in Europe must rise with *a crick in his neck.*



THE merry actor was always the life and soul of a social party, and once, when he had caused considerable merriment at a gathering at Bath, a nobleman, not distinguished for his parts, exclaimed to him—

"What a pity it is, Quin, my boy, that a

clever fellow like you should be only *a player!*"

"Why," retorted the wit with ready indignation, "what would your lordship have me be?—*only a lord?*"

A LADY having asked why it was that there were more women than men in the world, Quin replied: "It is in conformity with the other arrangements of nature, madam; we always see more of heaven than earth."

QUIN was disputing with a friend concerning the execution of Charles the First, when the friend demanded—

"By what laws was he put to death?"

"By all the laws that he had left them," readily replied the wit.

AT a small dinner-party the host asked Quin to partake of a particularly delicious pudding, to which his next neighbour had just freely helped himself.

"Pray," said the witty actor, looking first at the dish and then at the gentleman's plate, "*which* is the pudding?"

WHEN Quin was dining with a friend, his host expressed his regret that he could offer no more wine, as he had lost the key of his wine cellar. Later, when he was showing his guest about the place, they paused before an ostrich.

"Do you know, sir," said the host, "that this bird has one very remarkable property—he will swallow iron?"

"Then very likely," said the wit, "he has swallowed the *key* of your *wine cellar*."

IN a July that was extremely wet and cold, a friend asked Quin whether he ever remembered such a summer?

"Yes," said the wit, in all seriousness, "last winter."

WHEN Garrick was drawing large audiences to Drury Lane one season, Rich was playing his pantomimes at Covent Garden to empty benches. The two happened to meet at a neighbouring coffee house, when Garrick asked the manager how much his theatre would hold when crowded.

"Why, sir," replied Rich, with the neatest compliment, "I cannot tell, but if you will come and play Richard for one night I shall be able to say."

DINING one day with the Duchess of Marlborough, Quin observed that his hostess limited her eating of venison to the leanest part.

"What!" exclaimed Quin, "and does your Grace eat no fat?"

"Not of venison, Mr Quin."

"What, never, your Grace?"

"Never, I assure you."

"Well," said the epicurean player, unable to restrain his genuine laughter, "I like to dine with such fools."

IN one of the debates on the Union, Roche is reported to have made a speech in favour of it, which he finished by declaring "that it would change the *barren hills* into *fertile valleys*."

A WOULD-BE actor applied to Rich, the theatrical manager, for an opening on his stage. Rich asked him to speak a few lines, when the young man struck an attitude and began in a rasping voice—

"To be or not to be, that is the question——"

"Not to be," promptly judged the manager.



SMUGGLING practices on the Shannon were being discussed, when Roche offered the following brilliant suggestion: "I would have two frigates stationed on the opposite points of the mouth of the river, and there they should remain fixed, with strict orders not to stir; and so, by cruising and cruising about, they would be able to intercept everything that should attempt to pass between."

SIR BOYLE ROCHE has many a "bull" placed to his credit. It is said that one of his children once inquired—

"Who was the father of George the Third?"

"My darling," was the enigmatic reply, "it was Frederick, Prince of Wales, who would have been George the Third if he had lived."

CURRAN, like Falstaff, was not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others. On one occasion, after a fierce debate, he placed his hand upon his heart, and declared that he was the trusty *guardian* of his own honour. Sir Boyle Roche immediately congratulated his honourable friend on the snug little *sinecure* which he had discovered for himself.

IN relation to Ireland's connection with England, Sir Boyle Roche said: "England, it must be allowed, is the mother country, and therefore I advise them to live in filial affection together, like sisters, as they are and ought to be!"

THE man upon whom all "bulls" are fathered is reported on one occasion to have said: "Single misfortunes never come alone, and the greatest of all possible misfortunes is generally followed by a much greater."



SUFFERING from an attack of gout, Sir Boyle instructed his bootmaker to make one shoe of a new pair larger than the other, and then blamed the man for doing the reverse, and making one smaller than the other.

"I WISH," said he, one day when opposing an anti-ministerial motion, "I wish, Mr Speaker, this motion at the bottom of the bottomless pit."

JOHN BAPTISTE SANTEUIL, having listened to a preacher give a most unsatisfactory discourse, said: "He did better last year."

"Excuse me," said a bystander, "but you must be mistaken, he did not preach last year."

"That is the very reason," rejoined the poet.

AN impertinent young fellow, dining at the same board with the learned John Scott, suddenly enquired of that worthy what was the difference between Scot and Sot.

"Just the breadth of the table," promptly answered the other.

SIR WILLIAM SCOTT (afterwards Lord Stowell) was a man of the readiest wit, and many of his good things are to be found in reminiscence literature of the last century and the earlier part of this, for, born in 1745, he lived until 1836. A learned judge, who was familiarly spoken of as "Mrs ——," was said to have suddenly changed his opinions in the most remarkable manner."

"*Varium et mutabile semper femina*," remarked Sir William Scott.

A FASHIONABLE physician flippantly remarked: "Oh, you know, Sir William, after forty a man is either a fool or a physician!"

"Mayn't he be both, doctor?" slyly inquired his witty companion.



WHEN it was proposed to get up a subscription for the benefit of Fox, someone observed that it was a matter of some delicacy, and wondered how Fox would take it.

"Take it?" exclaimed Selwyn, "why, *quarterly*, to be sure."

A NOTORIOUS gamester, by a run of good luck, was enabled to set up a carriage and pair. His good luck had, however, meant the ill luck of a son of the Rutland family. Selwyn, who knew the circumstances, met the newly-enriched, and complimented him on his equipage.

"Yes," said the other, "I am very well, but I am at a loss for a motto for the arms I have had painted on the panels."

"Oh! I can easily help you to one," said Selwyn; "what think you of *Manners* make the man?"

OBSERVING the then Speaker of the House of Commons tossing about bank bills at a hazard-table at Newmarket, the wit exclaimed—

"Look how easily the Speaker passes the money bills!"

GEORGE SELWYN was responsible for the following story, which has often been repeated, with variations:

Two friends, who had not seen each other for a long while, met one day by accident.

"How do you do?" says one.

"So, so," replies the other, "and yet I was married since you and I were together."

"That is very good news."

"Not very good—for it was my lot to choose a termagant."

"It is a pity."

"I hardly think it so—for she brought me two thousand pounds."

"Well, there is comfort."

"Not so much—for with her fortune I bought

a number of sheep, and they are all dead of the rot."

"That is, indeed, distressing!"

"Not so distressing as you may imagine—for by the sale of their skins I got more than the sheep cost me."

"In that case you are indemnified."

"By no means—for my house and all my money have been destroyed by fire."

"Alas, this was a dreadful misfortune!"

"Faith, not so dreadful—for my termagant wife and my house were burned together."

SELWYN was dining with the Mayor and Corporation of Gloucester, in 1758, when news arrived of the English expedition having failed before Rochefort. The Mayor, turning to Selwyn, said—

"You, sir, who are in the ministerial secrets, can, no doubt, inform us of the cause of this misfortune?"

Selwyn, although utterly ignorant upon the subject, could not resist the temptation for hoaxing, and replied—

"I will tell you, in confidence, the reason, Mr Mayor; the fact is, that the scaling ladders prepared for the occasion, were found on trial to be too short."

ONE night at White's, Sir L. Fawkener, the postmaster-general, was losing a large sum at piquet, when Selwyn, pointing to the successful player, said—

"See how he is robbing the mail!"

"THERE is nothing new under the sun," exclaimed Horace Walpole, on learning that the Newcastle ministry would continue in power after the death of George the Second.

"No, nor under the grandson," replied George Selwyn.

"HOW does your newly purchased horse *answer?*" enquired Cumberland of Selwyn.

"I really don't know," replied the latter, "for I never asked him a question."

BRUCE, the celebrated traveller, was talking in his accustomed exaggerated style at a large dinner-party, when someone inquired what musical instruments there were used in Abyssinia. The traveller was not prepared for the question, and at length said, "I think I saw a *lyre* there."

"Yes," muttered Selwyn, "and there is *one less* since you left the country."

GEORGE SELWYN, when travelling on one occasion in a stage coach, was much teased by the repeated impertinence of a companion, who was constantly inquiring how he was. At length Selwyn could stand it no longer, and in answer to "How are you *now*, sir?" retorted—

"Very well, sir, and intend to continue so all the rest of the journey."

DURING the rage of republican principles in England, and whilst the Corresponding Society was in full vigour, Selwyn was walking one May day with Fox, when they met a troop of chimney sweepers decked out in all their gaudy finery.



"I say, Charles," said Selwyn to his companion, "I have often heard you and others talk of the *majesty* of the people; but I never saw any of the young *princes* and *princesses* until now."

A MEMBER of the Foley family having hurried across to the Continent to avoid his creditors—

"It is a *pass over*," said Selwyn, "that will not be much relished by the Jews."

GEORGE SELWYN, observing Bethel's sharp face looking at the prisoners during the trial of the rebel lords, said—

"What a shame it is to turn *the edge of the axe* to the prisoners before they are condemned."

SOME lady friends blamed Selwyn for going to see the execution of Lord Lovat, and asked him how he could be so barbarous as to see the head cut off.

"Well," said he, "if that was wrong, I'm sure I've made amends; for I went to see it sewed on again."

HAPPENING to be at Bath when that resort of fashionable invalids was nearly empty, Selwyn, *pour passer le temps*, cultivated the acquaintance of an elderly nonentity whom he had encountered at the Pump Rooms. In the height of the following season the two encountered in London, and Selwyn tried to cut his whilom acquaintance, but in vain.

"What, don't you recollect me?" exclaimed the visitor.

"I recollect you perfectly," replied Selwyn, and then added, with pointed rudeness, "and *when I next go to Bath* I shall be most happy to become acquainted with you again."

A SOCIETY beauty was showing Selwyn a splendid new gown covered with silver spangles the size of a shilling, and asked what he thought of it.

"Why, I think," said he, "that you will be *change for a guinea.*"

SELWYN being in a bookseller's shop, was conversing with a politician, a member of the Administration then in power. He was asked what he thought of the constitution of Great Britain.

"The *constitution* of England, my lord," replied the wit, "and that of your humble servant are alike in a rotten condition, though I must own that I have the advantage—for I have the advantage of an *able surgeon*, but our poor country is committed to the care of a *parcel of quacks.*"

THE effect of Burke's earlier speeches in the House was such that he got nicknamed "the dinner-bell." A nobleman, meeting Selwyn as he was quitting the precincts of the chamber, said—

"What, is the House up?"

"No," replied the wit, wearily, "but *Burke is!*"

SOMEONE of the same name as Charles James Fox having been hanged at Tyburn, Fox asked Selwyn if he had been present at the execution.

"No," was his answer, "I make a point of never attending *rehearsals*."

WHEN it was reported that Sir Joshua Reynolds was to stand for the borough of Plympton at the next election, there was much amusement at the political clubs over the idea of an artist or a literary man presuming to have a chance to get into the House of Commons.



"He is not to be laughed at, however," said Selwyn; "he may very well succeed in being elected, for Sir Joshua is the ablest man I know on a canvas."

LADY HARRINGTON, determined to outshine everyone at the coronation of George III., covered herself with all the diamonds she could borrow, hire, or seize, and, with the air of a Roxana, was the finest figure—at a distance. She complained to Selwyn that she

was to walk with Lord Portsmouth, who would have a wig and a stick.

"Pho!" said the wit, "you will only look as if you were taken up by the constable!"

Lady Harrington repeated this remark, thinking that the reflection was on Lady Portsmouth.

IN one of his speeches, Lord Shelbourne, alluding to Lord Carlisle, said—

"The noble Lord has written a comedy."

"No, no, a tragedy," interrupted Carlisle.

"Oh! I beg pardon," said Shelbourne, drily, "*I thought it was a comedy.*"

A CLERGYMAN, who desired to annotate Shakespeare's plays, took a specimen of his work to Sheridan, and asked his opinion.

"Sir," said Sheridan, shortly, "I wonder people won't mind their own affairs; you may spoil your own Bible if you please, but, pray, let ours alone."

OF an opponent who tried to do him an injury, and who plumed himself upon his cleverness, Sheridan neatly remarked: "I could laugh at his malice, but not at his wit."

LORD GEORGE GORDON asked Selwyn if he would choose him again for Luggeshall; but Selwyn replied that the constituents would not.

"Oh, yes, if you would recommend me, they would choose me if I came from the coast of Africa."

"That depends upon what part you came from; they would certainly if you came from the *guinea* coast."

ON the debate as to the Union of the Irish and English Parliaments, Pitt said that Sheridan seemed determined to have the last word.

"Nay," replied Sheridan, "I am satisfied with having the last *argument*."

WHEN Macklin was rehearsing *Macbeth*, and, from want of memory, detained the performers unusually long at the theatre, one of them asked Ned Shuter if he did not think it very extraordinary, that a man so old, and infirm in intellect, should attempt such a character. Shuter replied drily by lines from the play itself—

"The time has been,
That when the brains were out the man would die,
And there an end: but now——"

DURING the debate on Pitt's India Bill, at which period John Robinson was Secretary to the Treasury, Sheridan, one evening when Fox's majorities were decreasing, said, "Mr Speaker, this is not at all to be wondered at, when a member is employed to corrupt everybody in order to obtain votes."



Upon this, there was a general outcry made by everybody in the House: "Who is it? Name him! Name him!"

"Sir," said Sheridan to the Speaker, "I shall not name the person. It is an unpleasant and invidious thing to do so, and therefore I shall not name him. But don't suppose, Sir, that I abstain because there is any difficulty in naming; I could do that, Sir, as soon as you could say Jack Robinson,"

MRS SIDDONS' father had always forbidden her to marry an actor, and when he learned that she had secretly married a member of his company he stormed.

"Have I not dared you to marry a player!"

The "Muse of Tragedy" replied readily enough, that she had not disobeyed his injunction.

"What, madam! have you not allied yourself to about the worst performer in my company!"

"Exactly so," answered the bride triumphantly, "nobody can call *him* an actor."

A FRIEND having declared in Mrs Siddons's hearing that applause was necessary to actors as it gave them confidence, "More," interposed she, "it gives us *breath!*"

A WOULD-BE poet having written an eulogy on the Duke of Grafton showed it to Smollett, and desired that writer's opinion on it.

Smollett began reading the first page, "'Thou peerless peer'—oh, my dear friend, this is an intolerable error to start with; for heaven's sake strike it out, and let it stand 'thou graceless peer.'"

IN the controversy between South and Sherlock the latter said that "His adversary reasoned well, but he barked like a cur."

To this South retorted, "that *fawning* was the property of a cur as well as barking."

DR SOUTH used frequently to say that many a good man, who might have made a good pulpit, made a very bad figure when he was put into one.

WHEN Lord Stair was English Ambassador at the Court of Louis XIV., a minister one day at a dinner of dignitaries gave us his toast, "the sun, the emblem of my master, the centre of the universe."

The pledge having been duly and enthusiastically honoured, Lord Stair stood up and proposed "Joshua, the emblem of England."

AN Englishman asked Sir Richard Steele why it was that his countrymen were so remarkable for blundering in speech.

"Faith," answered Steele, "I believe there is something in the air of Ireland; and I dare say if an Englishman was born there he would do the same."

LAURENCE STERNE sarcastically said: "The most accomplished way of using books is to serve them as some people do lords; learn their *titles* and then *brag* of their acquaintance."

WHEN Steele was preparing a large room in York-buildings for public orations, it was no unusual thing for him to be behindhand in paying his work-people. Coming one day to see what progress had been made, he ordered the carpenter to get into the rostrum and speak anything that came uppermost so that he might observe how the room would do for sound.

"Why then, Sir Richard," spoke up the workman, "here have we been working for you these six months, and cannot get one penny of money. Pray, sir, when do you mean to pay us?"

"Very well, very well," said Steele; "pray come down; I have *heard* quite enough; I cannot but own you speak very distinctly, though I don't much *admire your subject.*"

ENGAGED in conversation with Sterne, the Duke of Newcastle observed that men of genius were unfit for ordinary employment, being generally incapable of business.

"They are not incapable, your grace," replied Sterne, "but above it. A sprightly, generous horse is able to carry a packsaddle as well as an ass, but he is too good to be put to the drudgery."

IN company with a friend at a coffee house, Sterne was accosted by a young man who had been railing at the church, and who inquired what might be his opinion on the subject.

Sterne, instead of answering the impertinence, observed that "it was curious but he had a dog



—a very fine dog to all appearance—but the worst of him was that he always would snarl at a clergyman."

"How long has he had that trick?" inquired the would-be wit.

"Oh, sir," answered Sterne pointedly, "ever since he was a *puppy!*"

SOME one having said that apothecaries bore the same relation to physicians as attorneys do to barristers, Sterne assented, adding, however, "So they do, but apothecaries and attorneys are not alike, for the latter do not deal in *scruples*."

A FRENCH gentleman asked Sterne, when in Paris, if he found in France no original characters that he could make use of in his *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*.

"No," replied the author; "the French resemble old pieces of coin, whose impressions are worn off with rubbing."

THE King of Prussia, proud of his tall grenadiers whom he was reviewing, asked Sir Robert Sutton, who was present, if he thought an equal number of Englishmen could beat them.

"That I can't tell, Sir," diplomatically answered Sutton, "but I believe half the number would *try*."

"DO you know, sir," said a pert young man to Swift, "that I have set up for a wit?"

"Then, young man," was the Dean's retort, "take my advice and sit down again."

SWIFT, on somebody enquiring what was at once the easiest and the most difficult thing to do, promptly answered, "to bolt a door."



THE Dean once preached a charity sermon at St Patrick's, Dublin, which disgusted many of his auditors by reason of its length. This came to his knowledge, and when shortly after he had to preach another sermon of a like kind in the same place he took care not to fall into the earlier error.

His text was, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given He would pay him again." After repeating his text the Dean added—

"Now, my beloved brethren, you hear the terms of this loan; if you like the security, down with the dust!"

LADY CARTARET, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Swift's time, said to the witty Dean, "the air of this country is very good."

"For God's sake, Madam," said Swift, "don't say so in England! If you do, they will certainly tax it."

A GENTLEMAN with whom Swift was dining, introduced, after the meal, some particularly small hock glasses, and turning to his visitor said, "Mr Dean, I shall be happy to take a glass of hic, hæc, hoc with you.'

"Sir," rejoined the witty divine, "I shall be happy to comply, but it must be out of a *hujus* glass."

SWIFT, in a satire upon the Dissenters, spoke strongly of a certain sergeant at law, who determined to chastise the author. He went to the friends where the Dean was staying and requested to see Swift alone. He then pompously addressed him :—

"Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, I am Sergeant Bettesworth."

"*Of what regiment?*" asked the Dean with imperturbable coolness.

THE motto which William the Third placed under the Royal arms, "*Non rapui sed recepi*," being pointed out to Swift, he very readily said, "The *receiver* is as bad as the *thief*."

SWIFT was in company one day when the talk turned upon family antiquities. The hostess enlarged a little too freely on her descent, observing that her ancestor's names began with De, and of course they were of antique French origin.

"And now," said the Dean when she had finished, "will you be as good as to help me to a piece of that *D-umpling?*"

DESCRIBING the harangue of the Prince of Orange to the Portsmouth mob, Swift said the Prince began, "'We are come for your good—*for all your goods;*' a universal principle," added the Dean "of all governments; but like most other truths only *half-told;* he should have said, *goods and chattels.*"

A LADY having thrown down her mantua, and with it a Cremona fiddle, the Dean happily quoted from Virgil—

"*Mantua, væ miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ!*"

HAVING preached an assize sermon in Ireland, Dean Swift was invited to dinner by one of the judges. As the preacher had been very severe on all concerned in the law, a young barrister thought to be smart at his expense, and enquired :—

"Doctor, if it were possible for the devil to die, don't you think a clergyman might be found to preach his funeral sermon?"

"Very likely," replied Swift, "and were I the man pitched upon I should do by the devil as I have just now done by his disciples—I should give him his due."

BETTESWORTH, having called upon him to disavow the offensive lines or take the consequences, Swift replied—"Sir, when I was a young man I had the honour of being intimate with some great legal characters, particularly Lord Somers, who, knowing my propensity to satire, advised me, when I lampooned a *knave* or *fool* never to own it. Conformably to that advice, I tell you I am not the author."

AN Irish peer had the following motto on his carriage "*Eques haud male notus*" (a nobleman not ill-known), but as he was not

remarkable for the prompt payment of his creditors, Swift suggested—

"I think that the Latin motto on Lord B's coach may be literally rendered, 'Better known than trusted.'"

AMBROSE PHILIPS was a neat dresser and very vain. In a conversation between him, Congreve, Swift, and others the talk ran a good while on Julius Cæsar. After many things had been said Philips enquired what sort of a person they supposed Julius Cæsar to have been? He was answered that from medals it appeared that he was a small man and thin faced.



"Now for my part," suggested Philips, "I should take him to have been of a lean make, pale complexion, extremely neat in his dress, and five feet seven inches high." (An exact description of the speaker himself.)

Swift let him go on, and when he had quite done, said, "And I too, Philips, should take him to have been a plump man, just five feet five inches high; not very neatly dressed, in a black gown with pudding sleeves!"

SWIFT on one occasion gravely told his cook to remove a joint of meat from the table and do it *less;* and on her alleging that it was impossible he said he hoped that when in the future she chose to commit a fault she would choose one which might be mended.

TO an elderly gentleman who had lost his spectacles the Dean said, "If this rain continues all night, you will certainly recover them in the morning betimes—

"*Nocte pluit tota-redeunt spectacula mane.*'"

THE last of the Dean's witticisms was an epigram on the building of a magazine for arms and stores, which was pointed out to him as he was taking exercise during his mental disease:

Behold a proof of Irish sense.
Here Irish wit is seen—
When nothing's left that's worth defence,
They build a magazine.

IT is a miserable thing to live in suspense—it is the life of a spider.

BEING one day at a civic feast, one of the dignitaries called out a toast,

"Mr Dean, the trade of Ireland!"

"Sir, I drink to no *memories!*" replied Swift with wonderful readiness.

THE stoical scheme of supplying our wants by lopping off our desires, is like cutting off our feet when we want shoes.

IF a man makes me keep my distance, the comfort is, he keeps his own.

A NOBLE lord trying to persuade Swift to dine with him said, "I'll send you my bill of fare."

"Send me your bill of company" was the Dean's reply.

JEREMY TAYLOR, having been presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was told that his youthfulness was a bar to his immediate employment.

"If your grace," replied Taylor, "will *excuse* me this *fault* I promise, if I live, to amend it."

A NOBLEMAN was one day relating to Swift an account of his whimsical exploits and various so-called "frolics," when the Dean interrupted him, saying,

"My Lord Duke, I advise you the next time you have an inclination to engage in a frolic, to try the frolic of being virtuous; and, take my word for it, you will find it the pleasantest frolic you ever played in your life."

TAYLOR says: my best pun was that which I made to Sheridan, who married a Miss Ogle. We were supping together at the Shakespeare, when, the conversation turning on Garrick, I asked him which of his performances he thought the best. "Oh," said he, "the Lear, the Lear." "No wonder," said I, "you were fond of a *Leer* when you married an *Ogle*."

WHEN Thelwall was being tried for high treason at the Old Bailey, he wrote the following note, during the evidence for the prosecution, and sent it to Erskine his counsel, "I am determined to plead my cause myself."

"If you do, you'll be hanged," wrote Erskine, and returned it.

"*I'll be hanged, then*, if I do" immediately answered Thelwall.

THELWALL and Coleridge were sitting in a beautiful rural spot when the poet remarked,

"Citizen John, this is a fine place to *talk* treason in!"

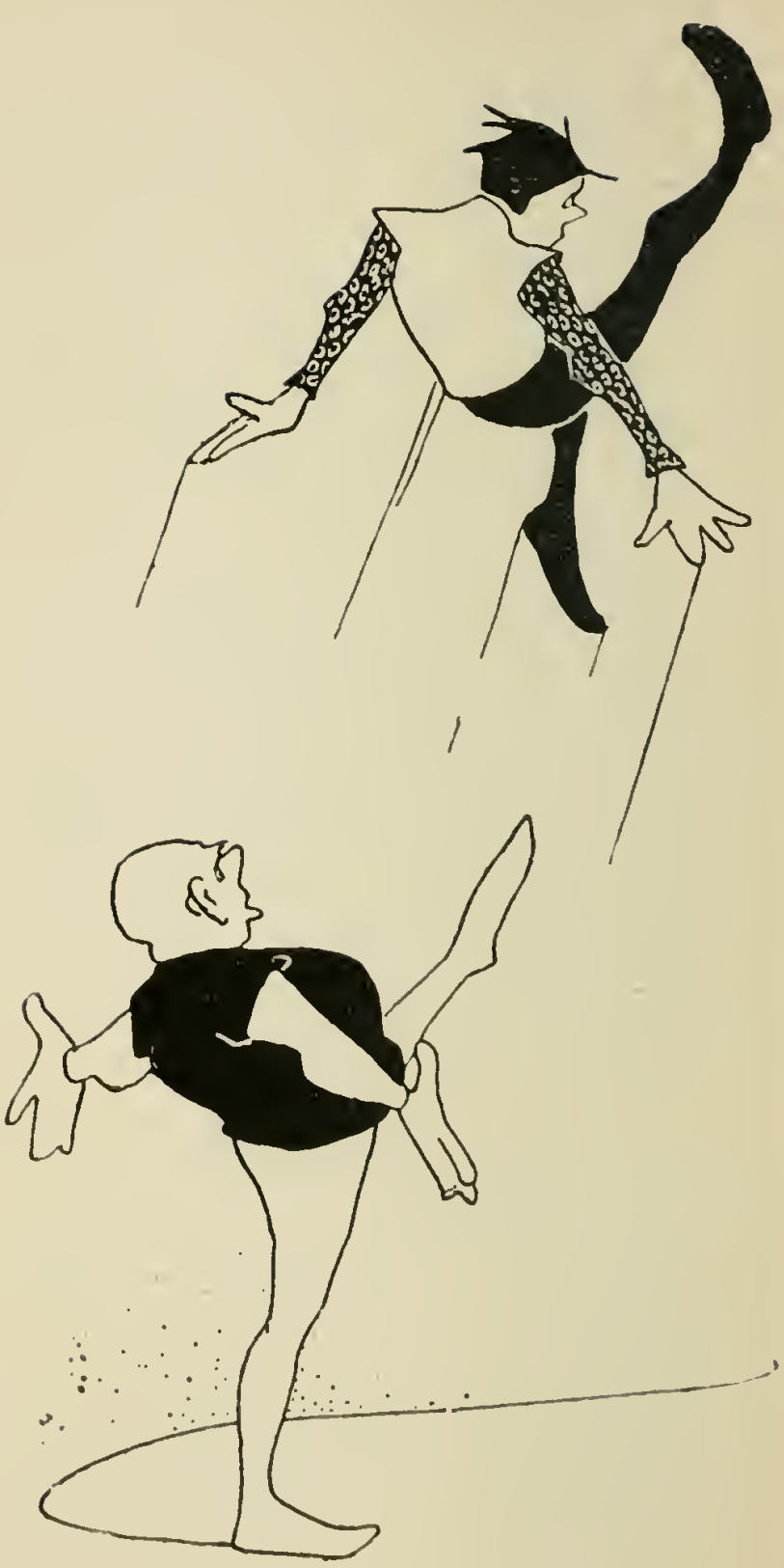
"Nay, Citizen Samuel," replied Thelwall, "it is rather a place to make a man *forget* that there is any necessity for treason."

JAMES THOMSON, the poet who wrote the *Castle of Indolence*, was himself of a most indolent nature. There is a story told of him that he was once seen, hands in pockets, leaning against a wall eating peaches off the bough to save the trouble of plucking them. On another occasion a friend calling on him in the afternoon found him still in bed, and on enquiring why, the poet gave the best of reasons for not moving, "Man, I hae *nae motive*."

WHEN Tooke was contesting the Westminster election, a not particularly reputable supporter of his opponent greeted him with—

"Well, Mr Tooke, you will have all the *blackguards* with you to-day."

"I am delighted to hear it, sir," retorted he, "and from such good authority."



WHEN Tooke was justifying to the Commissioners his return of income under £60 a-year, one of these gentlemen dissatisfied with the explanation, said hastily—

"Mr Tooke, I do not understand you."

"Very possibly," replied he sarcastically, "but as you have not *half* the *understanding* of other men, you should have *double* the *patience*."

HORNE TOOKE well said, "Law ought to be not a luxury for the rich, but a remedy to be easily, cheaply and speedily obtained by the poor."

Someone having observed to him how excellent are the English laws because they are impartial, and our courts of Justice are open to all persons without distinction.

"And so," said Tooke, "is the London Tavern, to such as can afford *to pay for their entertainment*.

LORD ELDON, when Attorney General, was in the habit of closing his speeches with some remarks justifying his own character. Speaking of his own reputation at the trial of Horne Tooke he said—

"It is the little inheritance I have to leave

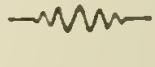
my children, and, by God's help, I will leave it unimpaired." Here he shed tears, and to the astonishment of those present, Mitford the Solicitor-General began to weep.

"Just look at Mitford," said a bystander to Horne Tooke, "what on earth is he crying for?"

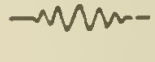
"He is crying," Tooke replied, "to think what a *small* inheritance Eldon's children are likely to get."



"I DON'T like to hear people dwelling so much upon *precedent*," said Horne Tooke, "it always shows there is something wrong in the *principle*."



BEING asked by George the Third whether he played at cards, Horne Tooke meaningly replied: "I cannot, your Majesty, tell a *king* from a *knave*."



UPON his acquittal, after being tried for high treason, a young woman introduced herself to Horne Tooke as the daughter of one of the jurymen.

"Then give me leave, madam," said Tooke, "to call you sister, for your father has just given me life."

WHEN Horne Tooke, who was the son of a poultry dealer, was called upon by his schoolfellows to give an account of himself, he said: "I am the son of an eminent *Turkey* merchant."

THE hand of the law is on the poor—and the shadow on the rich.

A POLITICIAN said: "If I was compelled to make a choice, I should not hesitate to prefer despotism to anarchy."

"Then you would do," replied Tooke, "as your ancestors did at the Reformation. They rejected purgatory and kept hell."

"HORNE TOOKE'S advice to the Friends of the People," said Coleridge, "was profound:—'If you wish to be powerful, pretend to be powerful.'"

WHEN, in 1759, there was a successful debate in the House of Commons in favour of a bill for augmenting the salaries of the judges, Townsend said that "The book of *Judges* was saved by *Numbers*."

A CERTAIN peer, who had a very exalted idea of his own cleverness, once said—

"When I happen to say a foolish thing, I always burst out a-laughing."



"Then," said Charles Townsend, "I envy you your happiness, my lord, for you must certainly live the *merriest* life of any man in Europe."

TOWNSEND was one day accosted by a peer whose son, a hard drinker, was then engaged in cutting down all the trees on his estate. "Well, Charles, how does my graceless dog of a son go on?"

"Why, I should suppose," replied he, "on the recovery, as I left him *drinking the woods.*"

THE Duc de Choiseul, who was a remarkably meagre-looking man, having come to London to negotiate a peace, Charles Townsend was asked if the French Government had sent the preliminaries of a treaty.

"I don't know," answered he, "but they have at least sent the *outline of an ambassador.*"

VOLTAIRE having looked over Rousseau's *Ode to Posterity*, said to the author: "I am afraid your Ode will never be forwarded to its address."

ON hearing the name of Haller mentioned to him by an Englishman at Ferney, Voltaire burst forth into violent panegyric. His visitor remarked that such praise was most disinterested, for Haller by no means spoke so highly of him.

"Well, well, what matters it?" quietly said the philosopher, "perhaps we are *both* mistaken."

OF a certain apothecary, Voltaire said that his employment was to pour drugs of which *he knew little* into a body of which *he knew less.*"

WHARTON made a courteously severe retort to Dr Johnson when the latter, falling upon him at Reynolds's, said—

"Sir, I am not used to be contradicted."

"Better for yourself and your friends, sir, if you were," courageously said Wharton, adding, "Our admiration could not be increased, but our love might."

SIR THOMAS WALDO related that on leaving the Duke of Newcastle's after a visit, he had to fee quite a train of servants, and having at length disbursed quite a large sum, he arrived at the cook, into whose hand he put a crown. The man at once handed it back, saying—

"Sir, I do not take *silver*."

"Don't you, indeed! then *I do*," said Sir Thomas, replacing the crown in his pocket."

HORACE WALPOLE wittily defined timber as "an excrescence on the face of the earth, placed there by Providence for the payment of debts."

WALPOLE, referring to Selwyn's well-known morbid hobby of attending all executions, funerals, etc., said—

"George never thinks but *à la tête tranchée*. He came to town the other day to have a tooth drawn, and told the man that he would drop his handkerchief for the signal" (alluding to the practice of stage criminals dropping a handkerchief on the scaffold as a signal to the executioner to strike).

ONE of the Fellows of Trinity College, Oxford, was reading prayers when he came to the verse in the *Psalms*, "Lord, thou knowest my simpleness."



"Why," broke in Wharton, "that is known to everybody."

Wit, however, in this case did not go unpunished, for some time afterwards, when the headship of the College fell vacant, Wharton, who was a candidate, asked his friend for his vote—which happened to be the casting one—"No, no," replied he, "I am not so simple as that," and Wharton lost his election."

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE said: "Patriots are easily raised; I have myself made many a one. 'Tis but to refuse an unreasonable demand, and up springs a patriot."

WHEN Wilkes was in France, a Court lady said to him: "You Englishmen are fine fellows; pray, how far may a man go in his abuse of the Royal family among you?"

"I do not at present know," drily answered Wilkes, "but I *am trying*."

LADY BARRYMORE said: "I wonder why people say *as poor as Job*, and never as rich, for in one part of his life he had great riches."

"Yes, madam," said Walpole, "but then they pronounce his name differently; they call him *Jobb*."

A CELEBRATED preacher having preached in Winchester Cathedral from the text, "All wisdom is sorrow," received a happy compliment from Dr Wharton in the following epigram:—

"If what you advance, dear doctor, be true,
That 'wisdom is sorrow,' how wretched are you."

DURING the persecution of Whiston, George the Second, who was very fond of him, suggested that, however right his opinions might be, he had better suppress them.

"Had Martin Luther *done so*," said the author, "your Majesty would not have been upon the throne of England!"

AN actor named Whitely, manager of one of the country circuits, had always a keen eye to the "treasury," and during a perform-

ance of *Richard the Third* he gave emphatic proof of this. He was acting the crookback himself, when from the stage he exclaimed—

"Hence babbling dreams, you threaten here in vain,
Conscience avaunt!—*That man in the brown wig,*
there, has got into the pit without paying—
Richard's himself again!"

JOHN WILKES, of *North Briton* fame, accounted for the regularity with which a miserly old citizen attended church by saying:



"He has a very good reason for it; for as he never gave a shilling, did a kindness, or conferred a favour on any man living, *no one would pray for him.*"

WILKES and Colonel Luttrell were on the Brentford hustings, when the former asked his opponent if he thought there were more fools or rogues among the crowd spread about them.

"I'll tell them what you say, and put an end to you," said the Colonel.

This threat in no wise alarmed Wilkes, so his opponent added: "Surely you don't mean to say you could stand here one hour after I did so?"

"Why," said Wilkes, "you would not be alive one instant after."

"How so?"

"I should merely say it was *a lie*, and they'd *tear you to pieces* in a moment."

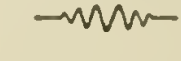


"I WISH you at the devil!" said a political adversary to Wilkes.

"I don't wish you there," was the answer.

"Why?"

"Because I never wish *to see you again!*"



SHORTLY after his appointment as Chief Magistrate, Wilkes was attending a city banquet, when among the guests was a noisy and untidy glutton well known at such gatherings. On his entry into the dining-room this

deputy always deliberately removed his wig and put on a white cotton nightcap.

Wilkes could not fail to be struck and disgusted by the novel sight, and at length the deputy walked up to him and asked if he did not think the nightcap becoming.

"Oh, yes, sir," answered Wilkes, "but it would look much better if it was pulled quite *over* your face.

IN an impressive scene in the House of Lords, when Lord Thurlow exclaimed: "If I forget my sovereign, may my God forget me!"

Wilkes muttered: "Forget you! He'll see you damned first!"

DINING at Dolly's chop-house, Wilkes met one of the aldermen, whom, though opposed to him in the city, he civilly accosted. The other made but a surly and churlish reply, and almost immediately began bullying the waiter and clamouring for the steak which he had ordered. When at length it was brought to him, Wilkes turned to his neighbour and said—

"Pray, sir, observe the difference between Dolly's chop-house and the bear garden. There the *bear is brought to the stake; here the steak is brought to the bear.*"

BOSWELL, dining with the sheriffs and judges at the Old Bailey, complained that he had had his pocket picked of his handkerchief.

"Pooh, pooh!" said Alderman Wilkes, "it is nothing but the ostentation of a Scotchman, to let the world know that he had possessed a pocket-handkerchief."

WHEN William of Orange was preparing his expedition to England, one of his officers ventured to ask what were his intentions.



"Answer me a question in your turn," said the Prince. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Certainly," replied the other, fully expecting that trust was about to be reposed in him."

"And so can I," said the Prince, "for which reason you must excuse me from telling you my intentions."

AT King's College, Cambridge, when not more than two of the Fellows had been at chapel with the Provost, the latter official,

Dr Snape, said in the evening to the Vice-Provost, Dr Wilmot—

"Upon my word, there was a scandalous appearance at chapel this morning!"

"Indeed!" said Wilmot, "but why apply to me? I did not contribute to make it."

SOMEONE who was disputing with Dr Wolcot said in a passion that he did not like to be thought a scoundrel.

"I wish," retorted the satirist, "that you had as great a dislike to *being a scoundrel.*"

PETER PINDAR addressed the following lines to the dramatist, O'Keefe:—

"They say, O'Keefe,
Thou art a thief,
That half thy works are stol'n, or more;
I say, O'Keefe,
Thou art no thief,
Such stuff was never writ before!"

WHEN Edward Young (author of *Night Thoughts*) was walking in his garden at Welwyn with a couple of ladies—one of whom he afterwards married—a servant told him that a visitor wished to see him. As he refused to go, one lady took him by the right arm, the

other by the left, and led him to the garden gate. Finding resistance of no avail, the doctor bowed, laid his hand upon his heart, and delivered himself of the following happy impromptu :—

"Thus Adam looked, when from the garden driven,
And thus disputed orders sent from Heaven.
Like him I go, but yet to go am loth ;
Like him I go, for angels drove us both.
Hard was his fate, but mine is more unkind ;
His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."



AT a club of which Young was a member, it was one evening proposed that each of those present should write an epigram on his drinking glass. The poet excused himself, saying that he had no diamond, but Lord Stanhope (afterwards Earl of Chesterfield) offered his, and Young immediately wrote—

"Accept a miracle instead of wit ;
See two dull lines with Stanhope's pencil writ."



WHEN Voltaire was in England he ridiculed, in Young's presence, Milton's "Allegory of Death and Sin," which produced this extempore epigram :—

"You are so witty, profligate, and thin,
At once we think you Milton, Death, and Sin."

AT a grand masquerade ball in Paris in the reign of Louis XIII. the king was discovered by two young courtiers walking in the ballroom with his arm round a lady's waist. One of the gentlemen complained of the heat of the room, and suggested an adjournment to the King's Arms.

"No," replied the other, "that will not do, the King's Arms *are full*, but, if you like, we will retire to the King's Head, *for that is quite empty*."

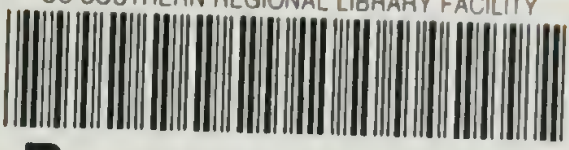


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